LABOR
in
AMERICA

Harold U. Faulkner

Mark Starr

THE AMERICAN WAY

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LABOR *in America*

UNDER THE EDITORSHIP OF

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Professor of Education
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THE AMERICAN WAY

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LABOR IN AMERICA

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Editor's Introduction

THE MORE THAN 130,000,000 PEOPLE WHO NOW COMPRISE the United States make up a nation that has come of age and has taken its full place among the great peoples of the earth. From a background of English beginnings, plus a blend of the cultures of scores of races, and the hammering and molding of the frontier, has emerged a distinctive creation by which we justify our claim to greatness. The American is not a distinctive racial type but the American way of life, our distinctive set of social, economic, and political values, is a contribution to the ages.

The American way of life defies the pen and the typewriter. He who would describe its whole outline may find that his analysis has in it all but the essence—and so nothing. For the American way of life has evolved to meet new conditions as new circumstances have developed; it is dynamic and vital enough to be dependable for the future.

One of the difficulties which those who would delineate democracy have encountered has been the confusing of the process with its fruits. We Americans have rightly cherished and placed among our highest values such achievements as our Bill of Rights with its freedoms, the Thirteenth Amendment with its liberty, and our system of universal education with its promise. These are the products of democracy, not the process itself. In a previous century, rugged individualism was achieved as an expression of democracy to meet conditions peculiar to that century. Times and conditions change and those who hold to rugged individualism have been challenged. Has, then, democracy failed? Not at all; a distinctive way of living is simply seeking other means of expressing and achieving its fundamental drives and values.

While the American way of life in its wholeness cannot be described, certain of its characteristics can be discerned. Three of these will be presented here:

(1) America has grown great, in spirit as well as in size, because we have sought the ideal that every individual has a real or potential worth or merit and should have his chance to develop it and demonstrate it. The American way of life has never selected and elevated a "*Herren-Volk*"; race, color, or creed should not militate against any individual here. American history does, of course, contain many instances of intolerance and prejudice. They illustrate our imperfections and our sins; they are not exemplifications of the values we place highest. Our ideal is that men here are created free—free from statutory or social inferiority—and equal—in their rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." We have a strong sense of fair play and, as perhaps nowhere else in the world, we have given the little man his chance.

(2) The American way of life has as its second characteristic the ideal of concern for the welfare of others. Our generosity and altruism can be illustrated in history. The value goes deeper than giving—it involves giving up. It implies a concern for good of the whole group, often at the expense of the individual. We have borrowed majority rule and representative government as machinery for this ideal and we have made them work with a diverse people covering the greater part of a continent. The "grasp" has not yet attained the "reach," as attested by the presence still of small-bore and often corrupt politicians, of selfish capital and grasping labor, of blind following of selfish or narrow-minded leadership; but common danger has proved the vitality of the ideal.

(3) As one of its essentials, democracy assumes the intelligence, potential or actual, of every man. Each has a

right to know the facts, to form his own opinion, to express his decisions. As in the case of the other two, no dictatorship could accept this ideal. Only in a democracy can there exist free speech, a free press, a free pulpit, and free schools. And the mandate to the schools is clear. Theirs is the task of informing, but beyond that, of teaching the paths to information. Since, however, information is only a clod in the hands of the untrained and socially indifferent, but a weapon for righteousness in the hands of the wise and socially purposeful, teachers must accept the fundamental job of training intelligence and building up to the status of a habit the process of clear thinking.

This book is intended as a tool for that teaching. Labor relations have been chosen as its subject because it illustrates phases of the democratic process, a part of the American way of living and thinking. It deals with a phase of modern life which contains many problems—problems almost as varied in their specific statement as there are persons concerned. An attempt is here made to show the way different groups have been affected. The student should be able to recognize how he, as an individual, is affected; he ought also to see that a whole host of people are similarly affected, that their decisions influence him and his decisions are important to them. The way in which labor in America reached its present status is also considered here, that is, the pertinent historical background; and due attention is paid to the gains which democracy has registered in the area of labor relations. No attempt is made to lead the student to think that he can "solve" the problems in the sense of causing them to disappear, but it is hoped that this book will help him to reach decisions, through clear thinking, about matters which affect him, and thus help him to do his part in realizing the promise of the American way of life.

To The Pupil

THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF ONE OF OUR AMERICAN LABOR Unions recently received the following letter, typical of many which come to its educational offices:

> Gentlemen:
>
> I am a student of the Blank Consolidated High School. As I am now studying about the labor problems of America I would like very much for you to send me all the information you can on your union. These are the questions on which I would like to get information:
>
> How much are initiation fees?
> How much are dues?
> Do you have a system of shop stewards and committees?
> If so how do they operate?
> Is there a Grievance Committee set up in your union and how does it operate?
> What form of contracts does your union use? (Please send one if possible.)
> Is your union affiliated with a national organization?
> What dues are paid to national organization?
>
> May I hear from you as soon as possible? I will thank you for your cooperation.
>
> Sincerely yours,

Elsewhere and in many places, high school students are studying labor in America, its problems and its possibilities; hence this book, which is designed to help furnish some of the answers which this student and others are asking and facing. It is excellent that high school students are looking directly at these significant problems which American society is facing. Only as they face them, study them and discuss them can we hope to reach intelligent decisions about them and to find intelligent solutions to them.

We hope in this book to furnish many of the answers to questions about the present organization and purposes of modern labor unions. But we think that this is not enough. In order to understand a modern problem or a modern institution it is necessary to see how it has come to its present position. All of us, persons and organizations, are what our past has made us, so a study of how labor unions came to be is necessary if we are to understand what they are and what they are to be. Much of this book, therefore, is devoted to the history of American labor. In considering the vast amount of historical facts available, the question was asked: "Does this help to explain contemporary American labor?" If it does, it has been included here; if not, it has been left out. The organization of the book has been planned to enable students to move from the present, back to the pertinent past, and to come again finally to the present, since this is the natural, intelligent process of study for whatever social problems one may encounter, whether in school or out.

To be armed with understanding is the first step in the process of intelligent action, but knowledge of the facts alone is not a sufficient guarantee of wise behavior. Development of democratic attitudes is also necessary. While they may be variously stated, these three seem central and fundamental:

(1) A respect for the dignity and worth of individuals and of individuality;
(2) A concern for the welfare of others, both in face-to-face relations, and on a planetary scale;
(3) A reliance upon trained intelligence, and a desire to use scientific thinking in facing one's social problems.

No book or books can develop these alone, but it is hoped that your teacher and you, concerned about progress in these directions, can find materials here which will make you more informed about American labor, more intelligent about labor problems, and more democratic in your attitudes in labor relations.

CHAPTER I

Why Study Labor?

LABOR IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF AMERICAN SOCIETY. OUT of a total population of nearly 132 million, over 38 million were working for wages or salaries in March, 1943.[1] It is this laboring section of our population—now vastly increased to meet the needs of war production—which will be the main object of our study, particularly the 13 million or so of wage workers who are organized into various kinds of trade unions.

Diversification of Labor

But those wage earners, organized and unorganized, do not form a regular pattern. Their names in the payrolls and time-sheets are Abruzino, Anderson, Aumiller, Bendick, Boisvert, Brown, Bronikowski, Cohen, Cooper, Cudahy, Dziuk, Dzingielewski, David, Ellis, Evjue, Garfield, Green, Gonzales, Hanson, Howell, Levy, LaBarba, Llewellyn, Loduca, Murphy, McGwier, Mineo, Olson, Panzeca, Perlstein, Robinson, Rome, Schiller, Smith, Sturdevant, Tobias, Totten, Tuma, Van Steele, Walker, Ward and Williams.

They make things, large and small. They build skyscrapers, ships and sewers. They dig coal and climb telegraph poles. They drive locomotives and adjust watch springs. They build planes and man power stations. They weave cloth and make dresses. They turn out tanks and tiny sewing needles, autos, armatures, boilers and buttons. They bake bread and make bridges. All the mining, shaping, melting, forging, building, printing, canning, cooking, spinning and sewing that are necessary to feed, clothe, shelter, amuse, and educate the whole population are done by individual members of that 38 million army.

---

[1] Labor Information Bulletin, U. S. Dept. of Labor, May, 1943. This total does not include self-employed persons, proprietors of unincorporated businesses, unpaid family workers, farm laborers, domestic workers and personnel in public service and armed forces.

They live in Chattanooga and Chicago, Sauk Center and Seattle, New York and New Orleans, Milwaukee and Macon, Peoria and Pittsburgh, Boston and Baltimore, San Francisco and Savannah.

Their wages range from the St. Louis bricklayer who earns $2.00 an hour to the southern mill girl who must work a whole day for that sum. Before the spread of unionism after 1933 and before the Fair Labor Standards Act fixed minimums of $11.00 weekly for a week of 44 hours, wages of $5.00 a week for unskilled workers were not uncommon. With many plants working overtime on war production, the official figures show an average weekly wage of $47.17 in February, 1943, for the durable goods group and $32.17 for the non-durable.

Out of these contrasting and varied elements, this textbook must make a general picture of American labor. Because the trade unions are the articulate, organized and influential section of labor, we naturally can learn most by studying their behavior, the way they grew, and what they are now doing.

No one in modern America can avoid knowing *something* about unions. Most of us have seen men and women carrying picket signs in front of some store or plant. "Blank Company Is Unfair to Labor," declared their placards. These strikers were asking the public not to buy in the shop or restaurant until a dispute with their employer was settled. Plants are picketed to keep other workers from taking the jobs of the strikers. Newspapers give prominence to strike violence, but strike settlements are less exciting, and the thousands of union agreements honorably kept and peacefully renewed are not "news" at all. There are arguments about the "closed shop" and the National Labor Relations Board, which decides, often by an election, which union shall serve as the recognized bargaining agency. In wartime, the War Labor Board (in which representatives of capital and labor sit together) hears disputes and makes its decisions. After its organization, relatively few strikes occurred because leaders of the American Federation of Labor, of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, and of the railroad unions pledged their organizations, as soon as war was declared against the Axis nations, to avoid all strikes in war industries.[2]

Usually it is the more intelligent and active wage workers who set up group organizations to protect themselves. Mutual aid, formation of groups, uniting of individuals for joint action are not new things. Even the ants and bees give examples of collective action. In schools boys and girls with common interests form clubs. Group activity, team work, coöperation, the town meeting, doing things together—all these are part of our way of life.

As social life becomes more complex, group action is unavoidable. In modern society men and women are grouped not only on the basis of where they live but also of where they work and what they do. Doctors and lawyers set up professional groups. Often the employers who oppose trade unions belong to employers' associations.

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[2] The extent to which that pledge was kept can be checked by the statement of President Roosevelt in his veto message against the Smith-Connally bill in June, 1943:

"That pledge has been well kept except in the case of the leaders of the United Mine Workers. For the entire year of 1942 the time lost by strikes averaged only five one-hundredths of 1 per cent of the total man-hours worked. The American people should realize that fact—that 99.95 per cent of the work went forward without strikes, and that only five one-hundredths of 1 per cent of the work was delayed by strikes. That record has never before been equaled in this country. It is as good or better than the record of any of our allies in wartime."

WELCOME DELEGATES
40th Anniversary Convention

I. L. G. W. U., photo by K. Joseph

Now in these United States over 13 million wage workers are united in trade unions to have a say about how long they work, about their rates of pay and their work conditions.

Social Contributions of Labor

As you will see in succeeding chapters of this book, trade unions and other organizations formed by workers and farmers have a long history in the United States and in other countries. They have exercised considerable influence and successfully agitated for many improvements—including the creation of the public school system. When the first political party of the workers was set up in Philadelphia in 1825, it had "free public schools" as a prominent plank in its platform. All historians of education agree that workers' organizations gave valiant and continued aid to Horace Mann and the other pioneers of public education. Ever since its formation, the American Federation of Labor has tried to secure better schools, properly trained and paid teachers and federal support to make possible equality of educational opportunity for the poorer states. Particularly in vocational education, labor provided leadership. Every A. F. of L. and C. I. O. convention has resolutions expressing interest and policies for public education.

Labor's fight for better housing to replace slums, to secure compensation against accidents and disease, to reduce the work day, to improve standards of life, to regulate child labor, to reduce industrial accidents—these have benefited not only men and women who toil, but the whole community.

The reason for such a textbook as this is that too often citizens, otherwise well informed, know nothing of this record and think of trade unions as alien imports whereas they are an integral part of the American scene. Many serious citizens are misled by exaggerated newspaper reports of the exceptional misdeeds of union leaders because union virtues have no gossip value and the facts about the real work of the unions are seldom presented.

Organized Labor's Relation to You

High school students, particularly those standing at the threshold of industry, need information about the labor movement. Trade unions are deeply concerned with the basic problems of getting a job, making a living. As you will see, they have for many years improved job conditions. Production and distribution of raw materials and manufactured goods are now largely carried on by corporations and companies rather than by self-employed individuals. Every individual, in his various roles as consumer, citizen, worker, or employer, needs to know the modern relationships between employer and employee, between capital and labor. He should know how these relationships have reached their present form through many years of painful experience.

Of course, if you were a Robinson Crusoe, marooned on a desert island, you would not be concerned with such matters because you would have to satisfy your own wants directly in a crude and difficult way. In the early days of our country the hunters and pioneers had to be jacks-of-all-trades. On the frontiers, families were their own doctors, teachers, brewers, bakers, and candle makers. But in modern times our well-being is based upon an intricate division of labor in which many groups of individuals and trades depend upon one another.

High school graduates, fired with ambition to get a job immediately, may find themselves involved in the delicate and complicated relationships that exist among these groups. For example, when you go to look for a job, the employer may say, "Well I'd put you on, but you must first see the union," and you may wonder why. The union naturally expects people who enjoy the benefits of union conditions to pay for them, just as we expect to pay taxes to maintain the army and navy and other federal government services. We could not have public schools or even get our garbage collected unless compulsory taxes were paid to our city and state.

Sometimes students blame unions because they are not able to get jobs. Fortunately there are increasing instances where trade unions and employers work closely with vocational schools to train students as apprentices. In these instances, such as the printing, building, catering, and needle trades in New York City, both employers and unions join with the education authorities to set up a supervisory joint committee to train and place would-be entrants into the industry. Then the student graduates go out into industry knowing about the organizations of employers and of employees, and the agreements which govern the hiring of labor. Such joint arrangements may prevent the evils of nepotism in industry (favored treatment for relatives), of too high union initiation fees, and unwise restrictions of learners. These evils often arise from a desire for monopoly rather than from interest in the future growth of the industry. When the last years of school life are closely connected with industry and the groups therein, the supply of skilled labor can be related to the demand: the young man or woman, anxious to get work, is not misled into believing that it is the union which stands in the way.

Importance of Labor's History

If you read such books about earlier times in Europe as *The Cloister and the Hearth*, you will get a picture of industry run by small owners, employing a few apprentices and journeymen who could look forward to entering business for themselves. Self-employed merchants and producers set up organizations known as guilds. Later the journeymen, when their chance to become employers lessened, formed separate associations. These came close to the modern trade unions, which are associations of men and women combined together as wage workers "to maintain and improve the conditions of their livelihood." Subsequent chapters of this book will show how labor organizations grew up in the American scene as a necessary counterpart to the growth of modern industry. If a thousand miners work for a mining corporation, they must unite and act as a body through their chosen representatives before their complaints and requests are listened to by management. Here is a new arithmetic in which one person does not equal another and in which the relative influence and power which a single man may possess must be measured. As Mr. Justice Holmes expressed it in a Supreme Court decision, the miners of our example thus secure "that equality in bargaining power in which freedom of contract begins." Then when the various mining companies act together to make a regional or nation-wide agreement, the mine workers must likewise extend the scope of their union. Or it might be that the miners first form a nation-wide union. Modern society thus becomes a pattern of varied groups with diverse yet allied interests.

You may have learned about earlier theories, opposed to this picture of group action and social regulation. Men believed in the *laissez-faire* theory which in labor relations insisted upon individual negotiations between worker and employer. It is easy to see why the workers were compelled by experience to equalize their bargaining power with that of the employer by joining unions. The individual cannot act by himself in modern life. "Above all others," wrote Horace Mann, the great pioneering educator, "must the children of a republic be fitted for society as well as for themselves." Labor organizations are now more than ever a part of modern society into which we must fit ourselves. They are agencies whereby democratic ideals of human betterment, of decent labor conditions, of mutual respect and of coöperation among men can be applied in the workshop. Your education would be incomplete without some knowledge of how unions were started, of their record and present activity.

REASONS FOR UNIONS

Besides helping working men and women to satisfy their need for a better life by securing higher wages and shorter hours, the unions meet another legitimate desire of human beings, i.e., to have some control over their activities while at work. Observers have recorded that well-paid workers, tied to a machine which sets the pace and governs every action, suffer from the "experience of personal futility," "heavy pre-occupation, pessimistic reverie." They feel "fed up" and bored with their job which seems to lead nowhere. A man who joins with his fellows in trade union activity may find the adventure and prestige and a sense of belonging denied him by his work experience.

Once, as the later chapters of this book will show, men joined unions to regain their self-respect by fighting the tyranny and exploitation of short-sighted employers anxious only to make wealth by any means. Now that period has virtually ended.

I. L. G. W. U., photo by H. Rubenstein

Trade unionists like these meet their employers on terms of equality to make suggestions about the running of the industry, to discuss wages and hours and working conditions and write their findings down in agreements usually arrived at without strikes and lockouts.

The modern union, however, assumes additional responsibilities to increase the well-being of its members and to share in community effort. The union members are trained in their rights and duties. Social, recreational and cultural activities are organized; credit unions, funds for sickness and old age, and medical service are provided; housing plans and protection for consumers against high prices are developed in conjunction with other groups. The more quickly and efficiently the basic economic job of the unions —to deal with wages, hours and working conditions—can be done, the more the unions can contribute to the social, educational, and cultural life of the community.

Criticisms of Unions

Because the history of labor in the United States is relatively unknown, numerous misconceptions and considerable misunderstanding about unions still abound. Mistakes arising from the ignorance of both employers' groups and unions create difficult situations. For example, musicians, alarmed by their displacement by the juke box and the radio transcription, try to ban the making of those types of records. The newspapers attack the union leader as a "czar" and forget to examine the basis of the musicians' fears. The musicians argue that they would be shortsighted to make records which would cause the majority of their colleagues to be unemployed. You don't, they point out, compel the iceman to manufacture the electric refrigerator that puts him out of business. If a dismissal wage, i.e., a lump sum paid to workers to tide them over until they find a new job, were provided from royalties paid by the users of the records, the real and genuine fear of the musicians would be removed. From the same fund, schemes for employment and retraining of displaced musicians could be financed until the actual results of the wider use of records are known.

Many union regulations rest upon long and bitter experience of industrial dangers. If the fear of unemployment were removed by adequate security, the community would be more justified in criticizing union restrictions, the so-called "featherbedding."

Another reason for misrepresentation is that exceptional instances of collusion at the expense of the public between corrupt employers and union leaders are widely publicized. Some leaders have indeed misused their office. Gangsters admittedly have muscled into a few unions. There are also cases of prohibitive initiation fees and high dues. Strikes have sometimes been called without proper resort to mediation machinery. There are dangers of tyranny in the "closed shop" (i.e., restriction of right to work to union members), because power can always be abused.

However, the intelligent person will examine the situation as a whole. Our political system is not condemned because some political leaders have been dishonest. Individual bankers have proven unworthy of the trust placed in them, but we do not condemn banking on that account.

Services Rendered by Unions

The record will show that labor unions grew up in the United States as a praiseworthy effort in mutual aid to protect the men and women who toil. Their history shows, both in the past and present, a valuable contribution to the well-being of the community by way of higher standards of life, higher wages, shorter hours, increased social security. Their unstinted participation in the all-out production effort during the Second World War is the latest addition to that record. Production was quadrupled because workers sacrificed their normal regulations of the work-week and gave hundreds of thousands of practical suggestions to speed up work and increase output.

The men and women who make up the unions of today are typical American citizens who unite for specific economic purposes. They are the soldiers without uniform whose sweat, brawn and brain are indispensable both in peace and war. Contrary to popular assumptions, for one strike which disturbs production, thousands are prevented by union negotiation. The majority of unions coöperate with employers in collective bargaining and loyally abide by their contracts.

The union dues paid are devoted in part to extensive provisions for aid in times of sickness, old age, death, and unemployment. The wartime "union membership maintenance clause" granted by the War Labor Board was only fair compensation to the union for the yielding up of all its normal methods of influencing the employer and the workers. The "closed shop" or the "union shop" (see definitions on pages 253–54) is merely logical application of majority rule and is as fair as our system of public taxation under which we all share the cost of maintaining the services which protect and educate us. The unions maintain likewise that all the workers who enjoy conditions won by union effort should assume the responsibilities of union membership. Some employers feel that it is an advantage to deal with all their workers collectively through the union representatives and to have them all subject to union discipline.

Instead of preventing improvements in production, many unions equip their members technically to keep abreast of all inventions and technical advances. Plans for union-management coöperation are operated successfully and have been extended under the War Production Board to cover 3,500,000 workers. These activities will be shown both in their origin and current operation in other sections of this book.

As the history of the unions told in subsequent chapters will show, desperate workers have sometimes resorted to violence, but not without provocation. There have been clashes between strikers and police with a deplorable loss of life. Employers used the courts to suppress unions, planted spies within union ranks, hired gangsters to smash picket lines, and fostered company unions to prevent genuine collective bargaining. Happily those days are largely gone; such activities are now illegal. They should, however, be studied as a warning against their possible return. It is our responsibility as citizens in the modern industrial age to know how and why labor unions grew up and to examine their general record. Thus we can eliminate tensions and bitterness between groups and approach our contemporary social problems with a better chance of solving them.

Unions depend, like other democratic organizations, upon the intelligence of their members to choose good officers and to study and adopt wise policies in the light of facts. Now more than ever, citizens organized on the job have to be informed about the industry in which they work and the general economic situation. To the extent that the unions no longer have to fight for sheer survival, they can participate in schemes of coöperation between union and management. Everybody knows that better and more work is done when the workers are treated properly. Dictatorship should have no place in industry or in politics, and if union members are well informed, they can correct such dangers.

One other great problem which the community faces is the fear of labor which exists in the minds of people uninformed about the movement. The prevalent misconception is that the New Deal has given labor a special privileged position and that it may misuse its great power. This fear rests upon ignorance about the purpose and practices of the trade union movement and a lack of knowledge of the American citizens who form the trade unions.

Unions and Community Life

Hence, the labor union movement has a problem of integrating itself more consciously with community life. During the war the participation of labor in civic activities was greatly enhanced. Millions of trade unionists became soldiers and sailors. The trade unions contributed considerable sums to the Red Cross, to the USO, and to other activities to help both the soldiers and the civilian population. Labor, recognized in industry, was able to send its representatives into civilian defense activities and to be represented upon many official committees safeguarding the life and happiness of the community. In many areas, of course, this activity has not been introduced or understood as it should be, but there can be little doubt that if the trade unions are able to explain their real activities, they will win community support in the United States because here the man who works has always been respected. The best American traditions have recognized no distinctions but those built upon honest work and attainments. What a man thinks and does is more important than who his father was or whether he came from a long line of titled ancestors. This gives additional interest to the study of organizations set up by the workers.

The story of labor unions can be told fully only by examining the early type of workers in colonial days and following the many changes which have come in our industrial life. The serf of the feudal manor, the chattel slave of the plantation, the indentured servant of the early towns have been replaced by the worker dependent for livelihood upon the receipt of wage or salary. The hand-tools and the small business are now replaced in the basic industries by gigantic costly power-driven machines and huge corporations. Old-time craft skills in some instances have been made unnecessary by mechanized mass production. How have these changes affected the workers and their unions? What are the various types of unions—craft, trade, industrial, and general—which have grown up to meet varying needs and circumstances? What is the relation between the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations?

What are the functions of trade unions in the workshop, in the community? What are their likely functions in the future? How will they affect you? What is their relation to city, state, and federal government? What is their place in our democratic way of life which aims to free men from want and fear of oppression? Here are the facts of history summarized and the role of the unions described for your study and judgment and to guide your action.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. The old-time employer argued that he bought labor-power as he did other commodities necessary for his business and that his utilization of this was nobody's business but his own. Make a list of reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with him.
2. Search for any current criticism made of labor unions and union leaders and bring to class for discussion.
3. Be prepared to discuss the following statement on the closed shop made by the economist and industrial expert, Roger Babson:

   "Stockholders already have a 'closed shop.' That is, one stockholder cannot act apart from the others except once a year at a stockholders' meeting. If a stockholder does not like the policy of the company, he can sell his stock and get out. The same privilege is granted to all members of a closed shop labor union. If they don't like their job, they can resign and work elsewhere.

   "Stockholders always have been represented by their president, who exclusively speaks for them, which is what the labor unions have had to fight for. Both groups should equally have the right to employ outside counsel. Hence, when looked at impartially, the labor union members are not asking for any more privileges than stockholders now have. The big question is whether or not the labor union officials are as wise, fair, and frank as the company officials."
4. Get in touch with the office of a local union, or the national office of a union, if located in your city. Find out when a wage arbitration case is being heard, and if possible, secure permission and attend its sessions.

CHAPTER II

Early Labor in Europe and America

AN EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE IN THE FIRST CHAPTER TO present in somewhat general terms certain problems of labor as we face them today in America. To understand these problems it is necessary to go back at least as far as medieval Europe, and trace briefly the rise of the wage earner from the serf on the manor to the union member of today. This is not always an easy task, for early historians devoted their books to the story of kings, nobles, and mighty churchmen. They wrote long accounts of sieges and battles, but little on the struggle of workers to win a better place in the economic world. The annals of the poor in earlier centuries are, indeed, brief.

As we come down to more recent years, we know more of the history of the wage earner. Unions keep more complete records, government departments are busy collecting information and statistics, and the public press covers the more spectacular aspects of labor history. Labor unions themselves publish weekly or monthly papers for their members. Interested students now write the lives of labor leaders as well as those of kings and soldiers. From these and other sources we can now construct a fairly accurate picture of the worker in modern society.

REVIVAL OF MEDIEVAL CITY LIFE

The wage earner, as we know him today, scarcely existed in the early Middle Ages. Civilization was then essentially rural; almost everyone lived on a feudal manor, cultivating in crude fashion the few crops of the time, and dividing his energy between working on his own land and on that reserved for the lord of the manor. What few manufactured commodities were needed, such as clothing or farm tools, the peasants or serfs made in their own homes. If the manor was of sufficient size, there was an opportunity for specialization and a chance for smiths, weavers, millers, and bakers to earn a living in their crafts. These men were not wage earners; part of their product went to the lord, the remainder was traded to the farmers for foodstuffs and raw materials. Both the farmers and craftsmen were ordinarily serfs of the manor, bound to the soil and required to render service to the lord either in labor or in produce or both.

The emergence of the wage earner came with the rise of towns and the decline of the manor. During the chaos in Western Europe that followed the break-up of the Roman Empire the earlier towns or cities largely disappeared. By the tenth century, however, town life began to develop again as Europe was stirred by new economic forces. Of these the revival of commerce was the most important. A merchant class appeared who established quarters at strategic points on routes of commerce where the surpluses of one community were brought to be exchanged for those of another. Here also gravitated artisans of one kind or another to turn raw materials into finished goods. As these towns grew in size and population they were able to win from lords or king special charters or rights of self-government which freed them from outside interference and made them places of refuge for runaway serfs or foreign immigrants.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE GUILD SYSTEM

With the growth of commerce, based particularly on the expanding woolen industry, the towns and cities of medieval England took on new life. Since their business was trade and manufacture, their economic life and their government came to be dominated by merchants and artisans who soon organized themselves into associations or *guilds*. The first to appear were the *merchant guilds* which controlled and regulated both trade and manufacture. Later as the towns grew, as different types of manufacturing increased, and as the business of the merchant and the artisan became more specialized, *craft guilds* appeared. It was the craft guilds that controlled and made the rules for manufacturing as it developed in the late Middle Ages and in the early years of modern Europe.

The Craft Guilds

The craft guilds were tight organizations which took upon themselves the power and responsibility of regulating their respective industries. They determined wages, laid down the rules regarding hours and conditions of labor, inspected the workmanship and the quality of materials, and fixed prices and conditions of sale. This was done in order to protect each other from unfair competition, and to maintain a high excellence of workmanship. There was also a real concern for the interests of the consumer as well as the producer, as is evident from the innumerable rules to prevent what they called "falsework."

Apprentices

Actual production of commodities was ordinarily done in the home or small shop by the master workman and his journeymen and apprentices. The apprentice was a boy or young man who was bound out by his parents to a master workman to learn a trade. The master workman was expected to provide board, room, technical training, and a moral education designed to make the apprentice a useful member of society. On his part, the apprentice was expected to obey his master, work diligently, and safeguard his master's interest. Terms of apprenticeship ran from three to twelve years, depending on the difficulty of the trade, and the apprentice usually lived as a member of the master's family. Sometimes toward the end of the apprenticeship he received a small wage.

After serving his apprenticeship the young man became a journeyman and was employed by a master workman at wages specified by the guild. This period lasted in the earlier guild period for two or three years and was designed to give the recent apprentice a wider experience and a chance to accumulate some capital to set up as a master workman. After his experience as a journeyman, he might become a master workman, but before he could establish himself as such or be received into full guild membership he must satisfy the guild by some means or other as to his skill as a workman. This meant an examination and in some cases an example of his best work, which was known as a "masterpiece."

Scope of Medieval Industry

It should be remembered that medieval industry was carried on essentially in small units. Like the small-town tailor, shoemaker, or baker of modern times, the master worked with the aid of one or two apprentices or journeymen in a shop often attached to his own house. He owned his own tools and he rarely produced for a "blind market." That is, he generally manufactured a specific product on order, either with his own raw material or material brought in by a customer. He was a merchant by necessity as well as an artisan. When medieval manufacturing reached large proportions, as it sometimes did, it was the accumulated product of many tiny workshops following the rules and regulations of the guild to which both masters and journeymen, at least in the earlier period, usually belonged. How large this industry might be can be seen by the observation of a Venetian traveler in London about 1500 who asserted that "In a single street named the Strand leading to St. Paul's there are fifty-two goldsmiths' shops, so rich and full of silver vessels, great and small, that in all the shops in Milan, Rome, Venice and Florence put together I do not think there would be found so much magnificance."

Despite the smallness of the productive unit there were bound to be some shops that grew larger and some master workmen who became wealthier than others. This was made possible by the growth of the market, by the increased supply of currency in Europe, by the inheritance of wealth, and the development of the "putting out system." The latter was a method of production by which a man with capital could buy raw materials and then distribute them to small producers to manufacture for him.

One result of this inequality of wealth among the master workmen was the organization of a top order of master workmen, known as "*livery companies*," which gradually obtained control of the guilds. At the same time the guilds became more exclusive, for the qualifications and costs were raised until the small master workman and the journeyman found it almost impossible to join. This brought a separation between the large and wealthier producer and the small one and also between the master workmen and the journeymen. This change, which covered two or three centuries, eventually brought the organization of "*journeymen's guilds*" to protect the interest of journeymen against the guild masters. Out of all of this there developed in the cities a large and permanent wage-earning class whose members had slight hope of ever becoming either master workmen or employers.

Comparison of Guilds and Unions

The student should be warned against drawing too close a comparison between the medieval guild and the modern trade union. There are many similarities, but also great differences. First of all, it should be noted that the guilds were composed of both employers and employed, and in the later years sometimes only of the employers. They were not workingmen's organizations in the sense that we think of them today. In many ways the journeymen's guilds of later years were more nearly comparable to the unions today. Modern unions are most interested in wages, hours and working conditions; the other problems of the business are left to the owner or manager. The medieval guild was concerned not alone with working conditions, but with the quality of materials used, the excellence of the final product, the price charged for it, and other aspects of the business. With the increasing importance of unions in modern production and with the new responsibilities which they must assume, it is quite possible that they may concern themselves increasingly with the same sort of interests which occupied the medieval guilds.

COLONIAL LABOR IN AMERICA

Conditions in England Causing Emigration

It was during the 1600's that England established her first permanent colonies in America. During these years the British Isles suffered from economic depression and widespread unemployment. Most thoughtful men of the time believed the nation to be greatly over-populated and its welfare seriously endangered by social unrest. Suffering was widespread and the highways swarmed with vagabonds and beggars. Parliament established systems of poor relief, but they were inadequate. According to an eye witness there were never "more people, less employment; never more idleness, never so much excess."

Fortunately for England there seemed to be a way out. The possibility of relieving unemployment by settlements of English colonies in America occurred to many. In the propaganda to establish overseas colonies the argument was constantly repeated that such colonies would solve the problem of unemployment. Not only would the colonies provide a place for the unemployed to go, but the commerce between England and the colonies would relieve unemployment at home. Settlements beyond the seas would provide new opportunities for sailors and shipbuilders, and for English artisans who would supply commodities for the new colonies.

Need for Labor in America

Not only was England anxious to get rid of her unemployed, but the new settlements in America were eager to obtain labor. In America lay a vast area of fertile land awaiting settlement and cultivation and an untold wealth of raw materials ready to be exploited. The problem was one of finding labor. Many forces impelled settlers to come to America. Religious and political persecution sent many. Primarily, however, it was the economic influence that started the emigrant on his voyage to the New World. Small farmers and artisans who had come to a dead end, agricultural and city workers without jobs—these formed the basis of colonial migration.

Scarcity of labor in the colonial period was met in a number of ways. Since labor was scarce and families were large, colonial families depended more on the labor of children than did the families of later years. When the problem of labor on a farm got beyond the capacity of even the largest family, neighbors would lend a hand. In this primitive society crops were often harvested, roads built, churches raised, and other necessary work accomplished by neighborly coöperation. Coöperative labor of this kind was more common in the colonial period than in later times.

Indentured Servants

The most important element of colonial labor in the South during the 1600's, and in Maryland and the northern colonies during the entire colonial period, was the indentured servant. Such servants were of two kinds, the voluntary and the involuntary. The voluntary servants came of their own free will. In exchange for passage to America they sold their labor for from three to seven years, depending on the difficulty of disposing of themselves. The involuntary servants included children and adults kidnapped and spirited aboard ship by professional "spirits" or kidnappers, and vagrants, debtors, and petty criminals who were deported by the British courts rather than otherwise punished. At the end of their service indentured servants were usually entitled to an outfit of clothes and tools and 50 acres of land.

Composed of all types of people, good and bad, the indentured servant made up a large proportion of the immigration of the colonial period. The system was as harsh and cruel as the age in which it was practiced, but it did help to solve two problems—it furnished a way for poor people who wished to get to America and it helped to meet the need for laborers in a new country.

Slavery

In their desperation to find labor the English colonists tried to imitate the Spaniards and to reduce the Indians to serfdom or slavery. But the Indians north of the Rio Grande were not so docile as those found by the Spaniards in the West Indies or on the southern mainland, and the English failed utterly. They did, however, begin the importation of Negro slaves as early as 1619. Nevertheless Negro slavery was not popular during the 1600's. It was not until after 1700 that Negroes were imported in large numbers. Probably 250,000 were brought in between that date and the opening of the Revolution in 1775. By the time of the Revolution there were probably about 500,000 Negro slaves, numbering approximately 20 per cent of the population of the English colonies. Most of them were plantation laborers south of Pennsylvania.

The discussion of colonial labor has largely centered around the indentured servant and the slave. There were, of course, free laborers, artisans such as carpenters, wheelwrights, cabinet makers, leather workers, blacksmiths, and millers, who lived mainly in the towns. A wage-earning class did exist in the colonies, but it was relatively small. There were even a few guilds in colonial America. In general, however, the market was too small to allow enough workers of the same trade to concentrate in one place, and the workers were too widely scattered to be regulated and governed by a guild.[1]

EFFECTS OF THE REVOLUTION

The effects of the American Revolution were principally political rather than economic. The thirteen colonies won their political independence but their economic life continued much the same. America remained essentially an agricultural community, exporting foodstuffs and other raw materials to Europe and in return importing manufactured goods. Until the coming of the Industrial Revolution, manufacturing remained largely as it was in the colonial period. In frontier communities each family manufactured its own commodities as far as it could. In the more thickly populated sections there was enough business for artisans to give their entire time to weaving cloth, constructing furniture, manufacturing tools, or meeting other needs of the community.

Nevertheless the Revolution had certain economic influences which affected labor. The blockade of American coasts during the war cut off the importation of European goods and stimulated home manufactures. The winning of independence ended the close commercial supervision of England over the colonies and the many restrictions concerning trade. The colonies were now free to trade in any market they could find. The Revolution also ended certain restrictions placed on manufacturing. More than all else, perhaps, the winning of independence freed America from the control of an undemocratic political system. No longer would America be ruled by a government dominated by nobles and churchmen who had little interest in the political and social rights of the common man. The people of these United States could now work out their own destiny. This helped prepare the way for greater political and economic opportunities. Among the latter was the organization of labor and the development of trade unions.

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[1] The best known of the colonial guilds was the Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia, founded in 1724. When the First Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia in 1774 it found the State House (Independence Hall) in use by the colonial legislature and held its meetings in Carpenters' Hall, the guild house of the Carpenters' Company.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE FACTORY SYSTEM

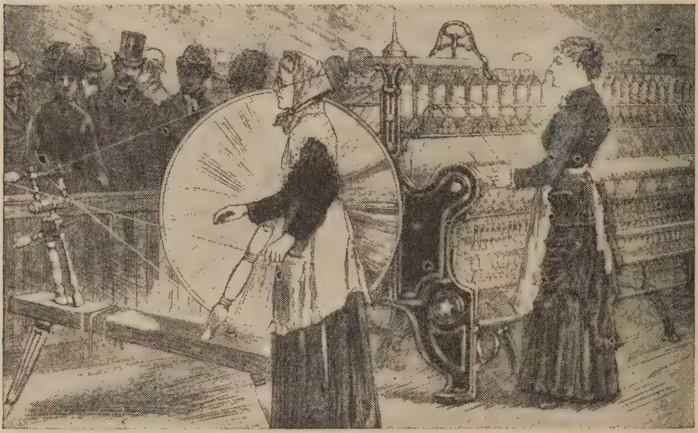
Workingmen's organizations, as we shall see, appeared in America soon after the Revolution. But the development of union organization on a larger scale awaited the growth of the factory system. This did not come to America until almost a half century after independence.

This was a world so different from ours that it is difficult to stretch our imaginations far enough to understand it. How could people get along without steamboats, railroads and automobiles? How could they produce enough products without machines to meet their needs? Yet this was the world as it existed before the Industrial Revolution.

The background of this whole story can be found in England of the 1700's. From the dawn of history manufacturing was essentially production of goods by hand labor and simple tools. Machinery was virtually non-existent. Manufactured commodities were made, as we explained in the last chapter, by master workmen, journeymen, and apprentices in the home or small shop.

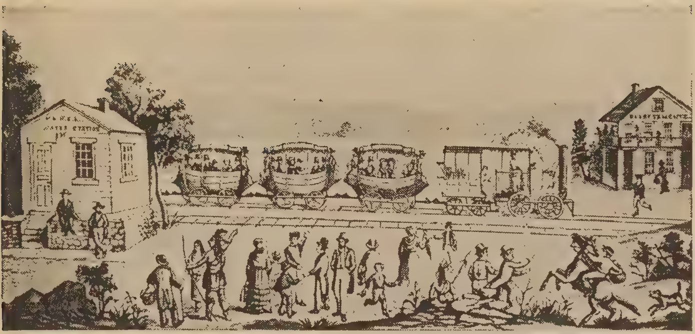
This picture changed rapidly in the 1700's when a number of crude inventions revolutionized the method of manufacture and the civilization of the Western world. The revolution began in the textile industry when several experimenters created spinning machinery and power looms that could be run with water or steam power rather than by hand. In the meantime, James Watt, a Scotch mechanic, invented in 1769 a practical steam engine. Designed originally to pump water out of mines, the steam engine was later adapted to provide power for textile manufacturing and to propel ships and draw railroad cars.

The Industrial Revolution



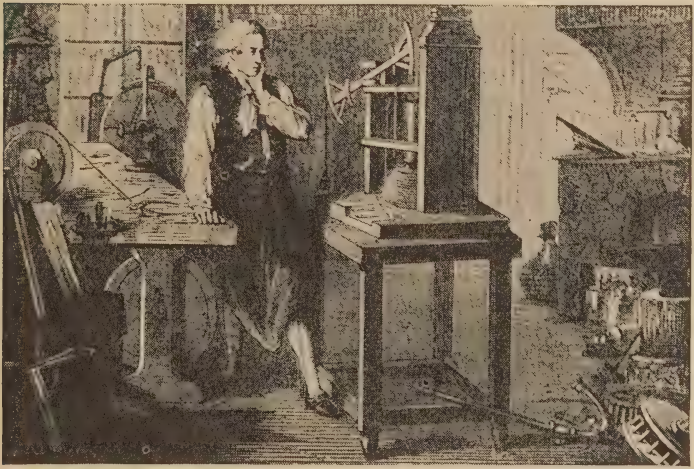
Bettmann Archive

The coming of machinery brought an "Industrial Revolution" resulting in the changes illustrated by this exhibit from the Atlanta Cotton Exposition—a change from handwork like that at the left, which meant limited manufacturing for direct consumption by the producer himself or his neighbors, to machine work like that at the right, which meant speedier production on a larger scale. Therein lies the full significance of the Industrial Revolution, because increased production is essentially for sale and for a wider market. This enlarged market area gives an impetus to the development of transportation facilities and of methods for distributing and marketing.



Bettmann Archive

Therefore the old stage-coach transportation shifted, by means of Watt's engine, to power driven railroads like this early train, which was the first step toward our modern streamlined trains.



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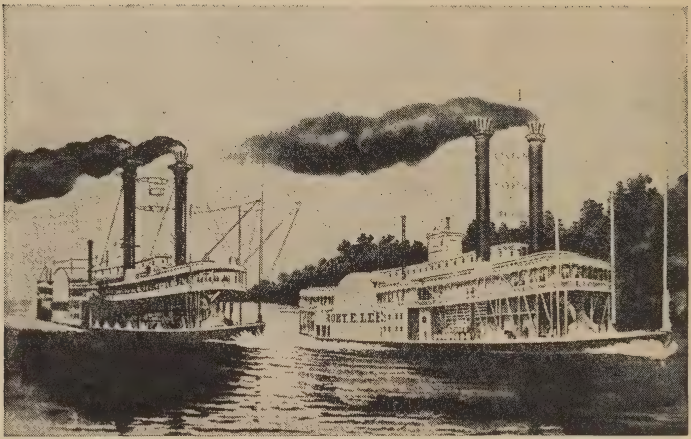
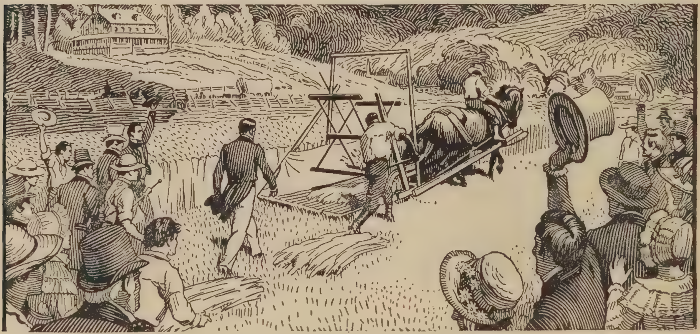
Because the tool, when taken from the hand of the worker, can be greatly increased in size, the search for power to drive it started. Watt, shown here in his workship, finally invented a practical steam engine, and other inventions followed which in turn made it possible still further to increase the machine's size and speed.



From an old print by Currier & Ives

The process once started, innumerable manufacturers, scientists and mechanics both in England and America, made improvements on the old machinery and invented many kinds of new machines. The United States' Patent Office, for example, reported an average of 77 inventions annually from 1790 to 1811. Between 1850 and 1860 the Office issued 28,000 patents. Among American contributions in the early years were Howe's sewing machine and Fulton's steamboat, forerunner of such boats as these on the Mississippi.



International Harvester Co.

McCormick's reaper, here shown in its first trial, and Whitney's cotton gin and his application of the principle of standardization of parts and interchangeable mechanism were other important American contributions of that time.

Impact on Labor

Upon no class did the Industrial Revolution have a more profound effect than on that of the worker. Machine-made products were much cheaper, if not always better, than handmade goods and eventually doomed the old method of hand production. As machinery took the place of hand tools, the skilled craftsman with his long training was not so necessary. The workman now learned to run a machine rather than to use hand tools. Furthermore, he learned to handle just one kind of machine, for specialization became characteristic of the new type of production. Moreover, the new machinery was expensive. Only the man with capital could afford to own it and the worker was forced to seek the owner of the machine if he wanted a job. The necessity for the worker to seek the owner of the machine and to sell his labor for wages created for the first time a large wage-earning class. It was the Industrial Revolution that divided industrial producers into owners and wage earners.

It does not take much imagination to see what the Industrial Revolution did to the worker. As soon as the tool was taken from his hands, he became little more than a cog in the big machine of production. The satisfaction which comes from the individual creation of a product was largely gone. The worker had lost something which wages alone could not replace. Moreover, he had lost the freedom to work alone; he was now tied to a machine and to the owner of the machine. In this change he had lost a certain dignity as a human being. Workers sensed this loss and strove to recover it in many ways. One way, as we shall see, was in the organization of unions through which many could work together as a group to improve their way of life, bargain on more equal terms with employers, and regain in a certain degree their earlier independence and importance as human beings. Organization of workers was an inevitable result of the Industrial Revolution.

BIRTH OF THE FACTORY SYSTEM IN AMERICA

Manufacturing was bound to develop in a rapidly growing nation equipped with an abundance of raw material. Immigrants were bringing to America a knowledge of the new machinery and ingenious mechanics reproduced it here. It was the Napoleonic Wars, however, that gave the first great impetus to the establishment of the factory system in America. France declared war against Britain in 1793 and, except for two brief intermissions, this war was continued until after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. During these years there was continual interference with American commerce. In an effort to force both England and France to respect our rights as neutrals on the high seas we attempted in various ways after 1807 to boycott both nations. Finally we drifted into a second war with England (1812–1815). During this period from 1807 to 1815 imports into this country were largely cut off and Americans, as during the Revolution, were forced to produce their own manufactured goods. Many shipowners and merchants turned from the sea to invest their earnings in little factories.

The factory system began in New England in the textile industry. In part this development was made possible by a labor supply obtained from nearby farm girls augmented in later years by European immigrants. It was aided after the War of 1815 by the tariff of 1816 which helped to maintain the newly established cotton and woolen factories. By 1860 there were over 1000 cotton mills employing more than 122,000 workers and over 1900 woolen mills with 48,900 workers. As late as 1860 more than half of the textiles used in this country were still made on the household spinning wheel and weaving frame, but the Industrial Revolution, nevertheless, was well under way.

Along with textiles, the iron industry was also expanding rapidly. Added impetus was given when iron ore was successfully smelted with anthracite coal in 1830 and when William Kelly of Kentucky independently discovered the principle of the Bessemer method of decarbonizing molten metal by forcing air through it. Iron for the machinery of the expanding textile industry and for the new steam engine that such Americans as Robert Fulton and John Stevens had done so much to develop was in constant demand. More important was the coming of the new agricultural machinery, the iron plows, the mowers, and the reaping machines invented largely by Americans. Another important market for iron was found after 1840 in the manufacture of stoves which were rapidly supplanting the old-fashioned fireplace for cooking and heating. During the same years the building of railroads was to supply a new but constantly growing demand for iron.

CONDITION OF LABOR IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Standards of Living

Since scarcity of labor is a normal condition in a new country, the status of the American wage earner compared to that of similar workers in the industrial nations of western Europe was fairly high, at least until the late 1830's. Wages of unskilled labor in this country were between one-third to one-half higher than in Great Britain and those of skilled workers almost as much. Nevertheless, the standard of living was still low enough. Two shillings at the time of the Revolution was a day's pay for unskilled labor, increasing to about 90 cents in 1800 and a dollar in 1825, around which point it remained, even during the activity of canal and railroad building. How drab an existence this provided may be seen from the description of the historian, McMaster:

> Sand sprinkled on the floor did duty as a carpet. There was no glass on his table, there was no china in his cupboard, there

> were no prints on his wall. What a stove was he did not know, coal he had never seen, matches he had never heard of. . . . He rarely tasted fresh meat as often as once in a week, and paid for it a much higher price than his posterity. . . .
>
> If the food of an artisan would now be thought coarse, his clothes would be thought abominable. A pair of yellow buckskin or leathern breeches, a checked shirt, a red flannel jacket, a rusty felt hat cocked up at the corners, shoes of neat's-skin set off with huge buckles of brass, and a leathern apron, comprised his scanty wardrobe. The leather he smeared with grease to keep it soft and flexible.[2]

Farm hands received from $7.00 to $15.00 a month, depending on demand, season, and locality, with the general average tending from the lower to the higher figure as time went on. Compensation of agricultural labor without board rose from 50 cents a day at the opening of the century to $1.50 and even $2.00 by 1860. The average of skilled labor, both agricultural and industrial, ran from $1.00 to $2.00 a day. An average about 1825 for skilled mechanics and factory operatives was around $9.00 a week. Judged by standards of today this income seems low indeed, but reckoned by the standards and prices of the period it was not intolerable. Skilled workers until the late 'thirties were able to maintain a fair standard of living.

The introduction of the factory system in America was not accompanied by the extreme horrors which marked the change in England. In this country most cloth heretofore had been purchased from England or made by women on the farm as part of their household duties. The factory system, therefore, threw few men out of work, and the factories for many years had to compete for labor with the more alluring prospects of independence on a frontier farm. For machine-shop mechanics and artisans in the building trades there were usually opportunities in the rapidly growing cities in the West.

[2] J. B. McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, I, 96–97.

Women in Early Industry

The early operatives in the New England textile mills were ordinarily girls or unmarried women who considered the chance of earning money and at the same time escaping the drudgery and dependency of farm life as an opportunity rather than a misfortune. Some of the early mill owners, either from desire or necessity, made efforts to provide comfortable boarding houses, safeguard the morals of their employees and, through donations to churches and libraries, stimulate high aspirations.

It was this sort of thing, as well as the high caliber of the factory girls and their comfortable living conditions, that so amazed European observers, accustomed as they were to the misery and degradation of their own factory workers in the years following the Industrial Revolution. To Anthony Trollope, the new manufacturing city of Lowell seemed "the realization of a commercial utopia" where the operatives were "taken in, as it were, to a philanthropic college, and then looked after and regulated more as girls and lads at a great seminary, than as hands by whose industry profit is to be made out of capital."[3]

Harriet Martineau, one of the ablest Englishwomen who ever came to America, was tremendously impressed. Said she in 1835:

> I visited the corporate factory-establishment at Waltham, within a few miles of Boston. The Waltham Mills were at work before those of Lowell were set up. The establishment is for the spinning and weaving of cotton alone, and the construction of the requisite machinery. Five hundred persons were employed at the time of my visit. The girls earn two, and some three, dollars a week, besides their board. The little children earn one dollar a week. Most of the girls live in the houses provided by the corporation, which accommodate from six to eight each. When sisters come to the mill, it is a common practice

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[3] Anthony Trollope, *North America* (1864), 245, 247.

for them to bring their mother to keep house for them and some of their companions in a dwelling built by their own earnings. In this case, they save enough out of their board to clothe themselves, and have their two or three dollars a-week to spare. Some have thus cleared off mortgages from their fathers' farms; others have educated the hope of the family at college; and many are rapidly accumulating an independence. I saw a whole street of houses built with the earnings of the girls; some with piazzas, and green venetian blinds; and all neat and sufficiently spacious.

The factory people built the church, which stands conspicuous on the green in the midst of the place. The minister's salary (eight hundred dollars last year) is raised by a tax on the pews. The corporation gave them a building for a lyceum, which they have furnished with a good library, and where they have lectures every winter,—the best that money can procure. The girls have, in many instances, private libraries of some merit and value. . . .

The people work about seventy hours per week, on the average. The time of work varies with the length of the days, the wages continuing the same. All look like well-dressed young ladies. The health is good; or rather, (as this is too much to be said about health anywhere in the United States) it is no worse than it is elsewhere.[4]

Hours and Conditions of Work

Undoubtedly the condition of American operatives was much better than that of similar classes in Europe, but it was by no means an enviable one. Moreover, life in the northern New England mill towns was better than elsewhere, for it was necessary to provide decent living conditions if farm girls were to leave their homes for mill work. A paternalism in which the operatives lived in company houses, spent their earnings in company stores, worshipped in company churches, and submitted to excessive supervision of their private lives would be considered intolerable

[4] Harriet Martineau, *Society in America* (1837) II, 57–59.

today. Certainly the long hours would tax the strength of even the hardiest farm girl.

One of the worst features of early factory labor, as well as that of all labor, was the long hours. Miss Martineau herself noted this when she wrote that "the people work about seventy hours per week." Actually the hours were from sunrise to sunset. A committee of the Massachusetts legislature, investigating the hours of children in factories as affecting their education, reported in 1825: "It appears however that the time of employment is generally twelve or thirteen hours each day, excepting the Sabbath which leaves little time for daily instruction."[5] As late as 1845 the average hours of labor in the Lowell mills, which was quite typical of the rest of the country, varied from 11 hours, 24 minutes in January to 13 hours in April.

Another evil of the early factory system was the widespread employment of little children. Miss Martineau in her optimistic picture of mill life mentioned the "little children" who earned one dollar a week. At first children were not used in the mills north of Boston to the extent that they were in England. The need of gathering workers together from the surrounding country, building quarters and boarding houses, involved special problems with children. Nevertheless, as time went on the evil became widespread and was unchecked by law.

In the mills south of Boston—Fall River, New Bedford, Pawtucket, Providence, and elsewhere—the practice was common from the beginning. Instead of bringing in farm girls from the nearby regions, employees hired the entire family to work for them. The first spinning machines set up by Samuel Slater (called by Andrew Jackson the "father of American manufactures") in 1791 were run by nine little children and ten years later the same concern was employing over a hundred between the ages of four to ten. The report of a convention of New England workingmen held in 1832 estimated that the children employed in manufacturing constituted about two-fifths of the number employed. Nor was child labor by any means confined to the mills of southern New England. It existed wherever there were factories with labor which children could do.

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[5] J. R. Commons, *et al.*, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, V. 59.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Keep an accurate account of all of your activities for one day, noting the time of beginning and ending each one. Plan what you would omit if you worked in a factory 13 hours a day.
2. Prepare a report for the class on the things which the medieval guilds did to make life richer and more pleasant for their members.
3. If you are interested in dramatics, describe for the class the plays performed by the members of the medieval guilds on the days of their patron saints, comparing them to the modern theatre.
4. Conduct a round-table discussion on the ways in which the frontier affected labor in colonial America.
5. In parallel columns in your notebook, compare the economic value of the Negro slave and of the white indentured servant, both in the southern colonies and in the North.
6. Using a part or the whole of the class group, dramatize the arrival of a ship-load of indentured servants in colonial Philadelphia and the auction which would then take place. Present it as though for a radio broadcast so that neither costuming nor stage setting is necessary.
7. Select some of the passages from Stephen Vincent Benét's *John Brown's Body* which deal with the journey from Africa on a slave ship and have a member of the class who can do it well read them aloud to the class.

CHAPTER III

The Birth of the American Labor Movement

DECLINE IN THE STATUS OF WAGE EARNERS

WHATEVER MAY HAVE BEEN THE CONDITION OF THE WAGE earner in the years immediately after the introduction of the factory system, it declined noticeably in the late 1830's and in the years thereafter. This was due in part to the effects of the depression following the panic of 1837 and in part to the competition of large numbers of immigrants. Until the early 'forties immigration never amounted to over 100,000 a year. In the early 'fifties it mounted to over 300,000, and in 1854 to over 400,000. In relation to the population in the United States, this was the greatest flood of immigration in our history. These immigrants tended to concentrate in the already crowded manufacturing cities of the eastern seaboard.

In the years after the panic of 1837 almost every trade experienced wage reductions at a time when the cost of living, especially in the cities, was increasing. Horace Greeley, editor of the New York *Tribune*, estimated that the cost of food in New York City had increased 50 per cent between 1843 and 1850. In 1851 he estimated a minimum weekly budget for a family of five at $10.37. Yet at that time carpenters, plasterers, and bricklayers were averaging around $10.00 a week, while a majority of painters, hatters, cabinetmakers, and other skilled workmen were getting $4.00, $5.00 and $6.00 a week. One observer believed in 1845 that one person in seven in New York City was a pauper. All this existed at a time when the city was growing very rapidly and the housing problem was desperately bad.

What was happening to artisans in the various trades was also happening to factory workers. Wages in the textile mills had dropped by this time to around $3.00 a week for women and $4.00 to $5.00 for men. It is true that a man could obtain board and room for from $1.75 to $2.00 a week and women from $1.25 to $1.50, leaving a margin of half their wages for other expenses. This might be enough for a single man or woman, but was hardly adequate to support a family unless other members of the family were also working. At the same time employers were joining more closely together in agreements as to wages, hours, and blacklists and extending their control over workers to intolerable lengths.

Labor papers constantly and correctly complained that the condition of the workers was growing worse and resented the optimistic comments of foreign visitors. Labor agents of the textile manufactures were still scouring the back country of New England for farm girls, but the "golden age" of the girl operator had passed. By 1850, says Ware, "the white gowned girls who marched to welcome Presidents, who talked so intelligently to foreign visitors, who wrote poetry and stories filled with classical allusions, were no longer found in the cotton mills. They had been driven out by a prolonged and fruitless struggle to protect their standards."[1]

Only by a careful study of early labor conditions can one understand the rise of labor unions. When people organize, it is for a specific purpose. The purpose of labor unions during the past century has been to improve the conditions we have described, as well as to end other grievances not yet mentioned. Long hours, low pay, child labor, the unsanitary conditions of work in the early factories, and the harsh rules under which he worked—these were the major grievances that the worker sought to remedy. There were, of course, many others. In certain places, particularly in isolated communities, the worker was expected to trade at company stores (stores owned by his employer) where prices were often unreasonably high. He found that the laws on the statute books generally favored the employer rather than the worker. The same was true of the courts. In brief, workers sought not only to remedy specific grievances, but also to improve the general position of the worker in our society.

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[1] Norman Ware, *The Industrial Worker, 1840–1860*, 153.

ORIGIN OF AMERICAN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS

Three important economic factors are chiefly responsible for the development of large-scale labor organizations in America—the coming of the Industrial Revolution, the concentration of labor in urban centers, and the changing economic position of the worker. The Industrial Revolution, as we have pointed out, changed the method of production from the hand to the machine and from home to factory. It separated the worker from his hand tools and little shop and forced him to seek the owner of the machine to sell his labor for wages. This created a large class of wage earners. Since workers now had to seek the factory to dispose of their labor, they naturally concentrated around the factories. This speeded the growth of towns and cities and brought together large groups of wage earners who could mingle with their fellows, exchange ideas more readily and combine more easily for resistance. Even before the Industrial Revolution, as we have seen, journeymen sometimes found it necessary to organize to protect their interests. After the Industrial Revolution their condition of life was so changed by their dependence upon the machine and upon the owners for a chance to work and live that organization seemed the only method to meet the problem.

There were, of course, other reasons which encouraged organization. One was the developing political democracy which brought universal manhood suffrage (right to vote) in most of the states by the 1820's. Through the ballot labor influenced politicians to consider the welfare of labor, and legislatures to pass laws improving the position of the wage earner. Diffusion of knowledge through an expanding public school system had its influence in the development of organization. Improvements in paper manufacture and printing made it possible to spread labor's program, develop loyalty, and weld the labor organizations more firmly together. An aggressive labor press contributed not only to the education of the worker, but also made the employer more aware of the aims of labor. These influences were also promoted by the development of railroads, the telegraph and, in later years, by even more rapid means of communication.

It was the Industrial Revolution that created a civilization which made possible the great national unions of today. Nevertheless American labor organizations actually appeared before the factory system came to this country and for years they were largely to be found among the skilled workers of the crafts and not among factory workers. In the late 1700's and early 1800's, when labor first began to organize, America was still primarily a nation of agriculture and commerce.

During these years the central and dominant figure in the nation's economic life was the "merchant-capitalist." He was essentially a wholesaler, importer, and exporter who bought in the cheapest market and sold where he could get the best prices. Sometimes he financed the individual worker or small shop by buying the raw materials and the finished goods, sometimes he expanded his own business into manufacturing for himself. In any event he increased competition among producers and forced down prices.

The presence of the merchant-capitalist at first drew the master-workman, his journeymen, and his apprentices closer together in an effort to protect themselves against the merchant-capitalist. It was not long, however, before this situation separated the master from his workmen. Associations of employers, hitherto chiefly interested in training apprentices and maintaining standards of workmanship and products, shifted their interests to reducing costs and increasing profits. Among other things this meant reducing wages. On their part workingmen began to organize for their own self protection.

Short-lived local craft organizations appeared in the 1780's and more permanent unions in the 1790's. The Philadelphia shoemakers organized in 1792, and the New York printers founded the Typographical Society in 1794, to be followed soon after by the printers of Philadelphia and Boston. During the next thirty years small organizations in the various crafts sprang up in many of the seaboard states and even in the larger inland towns such as Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. How many there were or how many members they had is impossible to know. The societies were purely local, although sometimes communication was established with similar organizations in nearby cities. Some of these societies, like the medieval guilds, were interested in establishing sick and funeral benefits. Primarily, however, they were interested, like unions of later years, in obtaining higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions through collective bargaining.

Methods of Early Unions

Although this early labor movement developed slowly and was localized in the larger towns, it is interesting to note that even in these early days most of the methods used in later struggles were discovered and tried. From the beginning of trade union history, workers have demanded the opportunity and right to negotiate with the employer over problems of wages and conditions of work. We find that *collective bargaining* was used as early as 1799 by the Philadelphia shoemakers in a wage dispute and was resorted to continuously thereafter. *Strikes*, although not common in the early years, are recorded as early as 1786 when the printers of Philadelphia quit work to protest against a reduction of wages below $6.00 a week. The *closed shop* goes back to 1794 when the shoemakers of Philadelphia compelled each employer to hire only union members. *Walking delegates* or *business agents*, as they are called today, were early appointed to see that both labor and employer lived up to agreements. At first "tramping committees" were appointed to do this, but it was soon discovered that it was more efficient to appoint one man and pay him.

From the beginning unions sought to establish control over the rules of apprenticeship, both to safeguard their own wages and the quality of workmanship. The New York Typographical Society, for example, complained in 1809 that "a superabundance of learners, runaway apprentices, and half-way journeymen" as well as "adults who had served less than half-time at their trade, had a depressing effect upon the wages of full-fledged workers."[2] This struggle to prevent employers from hiring unskilled labor under the term "apprentices" and so undermine the jobs or wages of skilled workers has continued to our own times. Fundamental also in the struggles of these early unions was an effort to establish a minimum wage, that is, a wage per hour or for piece work below which an employer might not go.

[2] Quoted by Commons, *et al.*, *History of Labor in the United States*, I, 114.

As associations of skilled workers developed, so also did *employers' associations.* These associations of master workmen or employers had first devoted their energies to combatting the merchant-capitalist in the hope of maintaining prices and standards of their trade. With the growth of unions they turned increasingly to the business of destroying these new organizations. As in later years, employers often agreed among themselves to resist demands for higher wages. Frequently they advertised in out-of-town papers for workers in order to flood the local labor market and thus drive down wages. They also resorted to legal action to crush the unions.

Legal Position of Early Unions

One of the most difficult problems faced by labor organizations was that of their legal status. Under the English common law any combination of workmen to raise wages was a conspiracy in restraint of trade and against the public welfare. Not only was this point of view the accepted common law in England but it had been enacted into statute law several times by Parliament during the 1700's.

In the absence of statute law in America governing this point, the question arose as to whether or not the English common law applied in this country. Between 1806 and 1815 six conspiracy trials were held, four of which were decided against the workers. Lawyers of the employers argued, of course, that English common law applied to America, and that the economic future of the country depended on the free right of an employer to set wage scales without hindrance from organizations of labor. Lawyers for the unions, on the other hand, insisted that this was a new country dedicated to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness," that workmen had a right to organize as well as employers, and that the future welfare of the country depended on establishing the right of labor to organize. Certain of the trials went beyond the immediate issue and became battles between the political philosophy of the Federalists and the Republicans. The Federalists upheld the English common law and the Republicans insisted that it had no standing here.

It was lucky for labor that the issue became a fight between political philosophies, for the Jeffersonian Republicans had won in the national election of 1800 and were growing in political power. Despite the victory of the Republicans in 1800, these cases decided that the English common law applied to America; but the courts hedged from the beginning as to whether a union was illegal. It was apparently legal as long as it did nothing. As time went on, however, the courts shifted their attention from the point as to whether a union of workers was a conspiracy to the question of the means employed by labor to obtain their ends. The right of workers to join unions was finally recognized in the famous decision of Commonwealth *v.* Hunt in 1842.[3] But for many years afterwards strikes, boycotts, the closed shop, and other weapons used by labor were subjects of legal action.

As it turned out, America's experience was not very different from that of England. In that country unions were banned both by common law and by statute law, but somehow they persisted. Finally in 1824 they were made legal, but their activities were greatly limited for many years. In America the English common law was recognized, but not stringently enforced. The legality of unions was finally recognized here in 1842 but, as in England, their activities for many years afterwards were also limited.

Organization and Politics

If any date can be set for the origin of the American labor movement as we understand such a movement today, it would be 1827, when the Philadelphia carpenters struck for a 10-hour day. They were quickly joined by the printers, glaziers, and bricklayers, and with this as a nucleus a Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations which included 15 unions was organized in Philadelphia. This strike in Philadelphia set in motion a wave of organization throughout the country. It also inspired in more than a dozen other places the organization of city trades associations like the Mechanics' Union of Philadelphia and like our Central Labor Unions of today.

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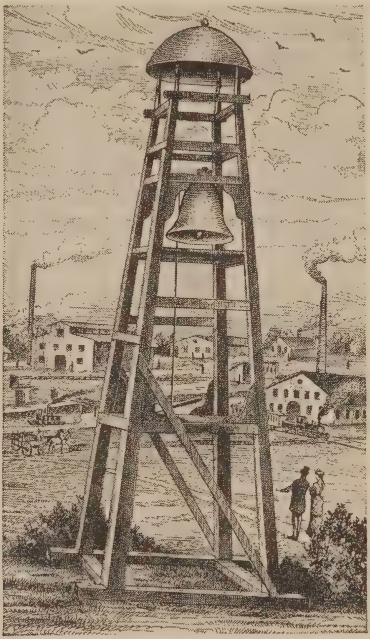
[3] 4 Metcalf 111.

Not only did this movement toward city-wide organizations develop, but at least five unions—shoemakers, comb makers, carpenters, hand-loom weavers, and printers—set up national organizations. The first national convention of labor representatives was held in 1834. By this time there were probably about 300,000 organized workers in the seaboard cities of the East and these groups included women as well as men. A rapidly increasing industrial life, growing urbanization and improved transportation facilities all helped to promote labor organization until it reached national proportions.

This first great burst of union organization in the late 1820's and early 1830's led to immediate efforts to make the strength of labor felt in politics. The right of all men to vote had but recently been won in the eastern states. Workmen prized this new opportunity and had high hopes that many reforms might be accomplished through the ballot box. In 1828 the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations in Philadelphia proposed to the several unions in that city that they join in nominating candidates "to represent the interests of the working classes." This they did, and several of their candidates, backed by the Jacksonian Democrats, were elected. Other cities, notably New York, followed the example of Philadelphia. In at least 15 states, local labor parties were formed and 50 labor papers founded.

But labor's first excursion into politics was not successful. New at the game of politics, torn within by factional disputes, and confused by the skillful attacks of the old parties, political efforts were local and short-lived. By 1832 they had virtually disappeared.



The Mechanics' Bell was erected in 1831 and was used to ring in the workers when there were no regular hours of labor and the mechanic worked from sun-up to sun-down. To remedy this situation, strikes were finally resorted to, resulting in the inauguration of the 10-hour day at the shipyards. Proud of the victory, the mechanics recast the old bell into this new one, which was raised in 1844. But not until 1886 did this bell begin to ring in a 9-hour day.

(*Culver Service*)

Social Reform

It was the demand for the 10-hour day that brought about the Philadelphia strike in 1829, the organization of the Mechanics' Union and this first effort at political action. But the interests of labor in these years went far beyond the 10-hour day to include many kinds of reforms. A great reform movement was sweeping the nation during the years of the Jacksonian democracy, and labor took an active part. Labor might have gained more if it could have concentrated upon fewer demands or upon objectives of more immediate concern to them. Such a policy was hardly in step with the spirit of the time. Innumerable projects to improve the world overnight were competing for attention and reformers of various sorts attempted to rally labor to their various schemes.

Although the movement for the 10-hour day was making real progress (President Van Buren decreed it for federal employees in 1840), labor perhaps made its greatest contribution in the agitation for public education. Now that the right to vote had been extended downwards to include the wage earner, they could no longer be ignored. Labor rallied to the slogan "free education for all children," and the records of the time are peppered with accounts of workingmen's mass meetings and resolutions in behalf of free education. Moreover, labor was not interested in the type of education advocated by the great reformer, Robert Owen, who urged a system in which the state as "guardian of all children," would support them and educate them along vocational lines. Labor, in line with the American ideal of a classless society, was more interested in the type of public school system proposed by Horace Mann, where all children, rich and poor, would have the same kind of education. The Working Men's party of the 1820's put public education definitely at the head of its list of reforms and other groups followed. The New England Association of Workers asserted in 1832 that "the want of education" is "the great and original cause of the comparative degradation of the mechanics and working men in this country." For over a hundred years labor has maintained this early interest in the public school system.

In addition to the 10-hour day and a free public school system, labor groups at one time or another advocated abolition of imprisonment for debt, restriction of child labor, and the passage of mechanics' lien laws (laws making wage earners privileged creditors upon a bankrupt employer). Economic reforms included abolition of monopolies, prohibition of private banks, and a better system of taxation. In the political field many advocated direct election of public officials and votes for women.

COLLAPSE AND A FRESH START

The decade 1827–1837 was an important one in labor history. For the first time labor made itself felt in our national life. Organization had progressed rapidly, political action had been undertaken enthusiastically and reforms of many kinds hopefully advocated. To contemporary observers labor seemed definitely on the march.

The chief explanation for this advance was undoubtedly the prosperity of the nation. It was an era when hundreds of thousands were moving westward to open up new lands on the frontier, when roads and canals were built westward to promote internal commerce, and when industry was expanding to take care of the needs of the new regions. Money flowed in from European investors to finance industry, transportation, and speculation in western lands. Roads, canals, and rivers were glutted with pork, grain, beef, and cattle flowing to the markets of the eastern states and to Europe, and heavy with returning loads of clothing, shoes, hardware, and other commodities. It was an era bright with hope, a time when rich and poor alike looked forward to increasing prosperity. During such a period labor is usually in an advantageous position. Workers are in demand and wages on the increase. Strikes to increase wages, reduce hours, or eliminate grievances have a chance of success. Workers have money to support unions and improve their bargaining power.

Such periods of prosperity have never lasted. State governments in the 1830's had borrowed money to build roads and canals more rapidly than it could be paid. Farmers had opened too much new land on borrowed money to meet their obligations. Too many people had speculated on the progress of the country, on the hopes of the new West. When the collapse came in 1837 the country was plunged in a deep depression. In 1836 the nation was riding high on a wave of apparent prosperity; two years later it was in a slough of despair. The depression following the panic of 1837 was the worst which the nation had yet experienced.

Effects of the Panic of 1837

If labor was in an advantageous position in the early 'thirties, the reverse was true in the 'forties. In a nation blanketed with bankruptcies and foreclosures the demand for labor rapidly declined. Unemployment was everywhere. "Business of all kinds is completely at a stand," said the mayor of New York in 1840. ". . . and the whole body politic sick and infirm and calling aloud for remedy."[4] An English traveler noted the effects of the panic in that city: "Not a smile . . . among the crowd who pass and repass; hurried steps, care-worn faces, rapid exchanges of salutation, or hasty communication of anticipated ruin before the sun goes down. . . . Mechanics, thrown out of employment, are passing up and down with the air of famished wolves. The violent shock has been communicated, like that of electricity, through the country to a distance of hundreds of miles. Canals, railroads, and all public works have been discontinued."[5]

With business at a standstill and unemployment widespread, strikes were bound to be unsuccessful. Many unions collapsed and disappeared. Experience has shown that strong unions, closely united and with an adequate treasury, can survive even the worst depression. Today many unions have large amounts stored up in their treasuries for a rainy day. From them they can pay sick and death benefits, retirement pensions, and unemployment insurance. They are no longer utterly helpless at times of depression. Such unions

[4] *The Diary of Philip Hone*, entry under June 11, 1840.

[5] F. Marryat, *A Diary in America*, (Paris, 1839), 17.

did not exist in the 1830's. The growth had been too rapid and their energies had been spread too thinly. The building of unions, the organization of political parties, and the advocacy of all types of reform was too great a task for these newly formed unions. Like thousands of banks and business firms, labor organizations collapsed like a house of cards.

With the disintegration of the labor movement, the field was left open for politicians and reformers of various sorts who hoped to rally labor to their various schemes. And it was a fertile field. Workers had tried organization and politics and both seemed to have failed. The economic world seemed to be going to pieces. Perhaps some quick "cure-all" would bring utopia. The old reforms advocated in the 'twenties were revived and new ones added.

Utopian Socialism

Of great interest to labor as well as to other large elements in the country were the various projects for coöperative living. "Utopian Socialism" had been brought to America in the 1820's by Robert Owen, who had tried out his experiment at New Harmony, Indiana. Here he tried to establish a self-supporting village based on the coöperative work of all its inhabitants. Owen's project had failed, but renewed interest developed in the late 'thirties and early 'forties after Horace Greeley and Albert Brisbane gave wide publicity in the New York *Tribune* to the coöperative organizations advocated by the Frenchman, Charles Fourier. Unlike Owen, who stressed the great importance of environment on the character of human beings, Fourier emphasized the economy and efficiency that would result if mankind were organized into self-sufficing groups where work and living conditions could be intelligently planned. Scores, if not hundreds, of communities of one kind or another were established in this country from 1820 to 1850.

During these years labor played with the ideas of profit sharing, coöperatives of various kinds, building associations, and agrarian reform. The latter was the pet scheme of George Henry Evans, editor of the *Workingman's Advocate* and prominent in the labor movement in New York. His program was to stop the sale of public lands to companies and speculators and to distribute it free in small amounts among actual settlers. His agitation caught the attention of many in the dark days following the panic of 1837 and undoubtedly hastened the passing of the Homestead Act of 1862.

That a wise Homestead Act would have speeded the opening of the West and been a great help to many people, is conceded. Whether it would have helped many wage earners in these years is doubtful. Factory workers and skilled wage earners were not farmers and most, even if they had desired to take up frontier lands, would have found it impossible to save money enough to finance a journey and support themselves until the first crops were raised. It might, of course, have stimulated migration of future wage earners to the West, that is, young men and women who otherwise might have gone to the cities to compete for jobs. After the Homestead Act was finally passed, however, it seemed to have little effect upon the condition of the eastern wage earner.

REVIVAL OF UNIONISM

During the late 1840's and in the 1850's labor shifted back from a general policy of advocacy of reform to one of "old line unionism." Most of the reforms they advocated were excellent, but they were no quick panacea for the problems of the wage earner. In any event, it was impossible to try them out on a wide enough scale to accomplish much. Moreover, the returning prosperity of the 'fifties pointed to quicker gains through organization, through a revived demand for the 10-hour day and higher wages. Discovery of gold in California, the rapid building of railroads, the growth of industry, and other developments brought better times and higher prices. Labor responded by taking on new life and organizing new locals and new national unions. The Typographical Union created a national organization in 1850, the Stone Cutters in 1853, the Hat Finishers in 1854, and both the Moulders International and the National Union of Machinists and Blacksmiths in 1857.

Not only was organization rapidly extended, but it was established upon a more businesslike and solid foundation. The influence of the "reformers" was weakened as labor turned to trade unionism "pure and simple." New leaders appeared to emphasize this trend. The panic of 1857 brought a brief period of declining wages and unemployment and hit organization another blow. This time, however, labor unions were in a better position than before to meet an economic depression.

We have tried in this chapter to describe some of the more important aspects of American labor history from the beginnings of the factory system to the opening of the War between the States. In many ways conditions were favorable for the development of a labor movement. The factory system was coming into existence, cities were growing rapidly, the frontier was expanding and the nation was developing by leaps and bounds. During much of the period labor was in demand, and thousands of immigrants were coming to America acquainted with labor organizations as they existed in Europe.

On the other hand, many influences worked against the development of a labor movement. America was restless and on the move. The typical American shifted from place to place as he sought to better his condition. He had little time to devote to labor organizations. America was a land of opportunity and membership in a labor union seemed to fix one's position in life. Moreover, the air was full of all kinds of schemes for reform, reforms which many believed would lead more quickly to a better day than the long, hard advance through labor organizations.

Nevertheless, these were years when foundations were laid and valuable experience gained. In their struggle to improve conditions, workers tried craft unionism, politics, and general reform. It was a period of trial and error in which mistakes were made but some progress achieved. Even as late as the War between the States American labor had by no means formulated a definite philosophy or a method of procedure. Its future policy would be determined largely by the economic development of the nation. We will attempt, therefore, in the next chapter, to describe briefly some of the main features in our economic life in the years after the War between the States and so lay the background for a further discussion of American labor.

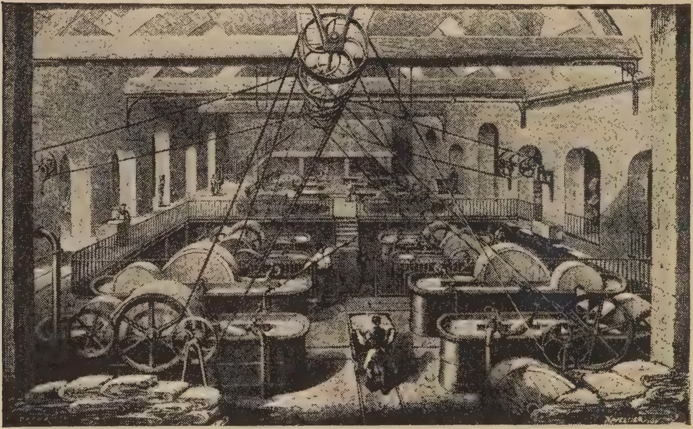
SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Find and read the poem "The Song of the Shirt" by Thomas Hood.
2. Locate the poem "Man with the Hoe" by Edwin Markham. Have a member of the class who can do it well read it aloud in class. Discuss the relation of the poem and "The Song of the Shirt" to the need for labor organization.
3. Prepare a report on the federal government's policies between 1789 and 1865 for disposing of the land which it owned. Consider also these questions:
    - (a) Why should eastern factory owners want the government to demand high prices for its lands?
    - (b) Would southern plantation owners want the price of government lands to be high or low?
    - (c) When Abraham Lincoln was a young man would he have favored high or low prices for government lands?
    - (d) What stand on this question did the Republican party take in their platform when the party was organized in 1854? Why?

(e) What was the plan for distributing land set up by the Homestead Act?

Various members of the class may take these questions and make a joint coöperative report.

4. Investigate the coöperative communities established and advocated by Charles Fourier and Robert Owen. Describe their organization and activities to the class, and in discussion, account as fully as possible for their failures.
5. Write out good, descriptive definitions for: collective bargaining; strike; closed shop; walking delegate.



6. This shows a paper-making plant refining and bleaching pulp in the middle of the nineteenth century. How did the application of machinery to paper-making such as shown in this picture affect the spread of labor unions? (*Bettmann Archive*)

CHAPTER IV

Changing America

IN THE LAST CHAPTER WE SURVEYED VERY BRIEFLY THE story of the beginnings of labor organizations in America. Such a story is necessarily brief, for labor unions were small and weak. The development of strong labor organizations and a labor movement, as we know it today, waited upon an expansion of the Industrial Revolution. In other words, it meant a change in the United States from a nation almost entirely agricultural to one whose chief business was manufacturing. How this came about and the storms and stresses which the change produced will be the main story of this chapter.

TRIUMPH OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The old America was a nation of farmers, artisans, and small manufacturers, transporting their goods by wagon, river steamboat, or canal boat. The new America still had its millions of farmers and its thousands of small factories, but it was more and more characterized by its growing population of millions of wage earners massed in cities. It was a nation of great capitalists, big businessmen, consolidations of capital, enormous factories, and a far-flung railroad system. In the 40 years between 1860 and the end of the century, population more than doubled (31,443,000 to 75,994,000), the number of wage earners almost quadrupled (1,300,000 to 4,713,000), and the value of manufactured goods increased six times (from $1,886,000,000 to

$11,407,000,000). So rapid had been this change that a distinguished economist writing in 1889 declared that a "recital of the economic experience and industrial conditions" of the preceding generation was "akin to a recurrence to ancient history."[1]

Factors in Industrial Growth

It was the embargo and non-intercourse acts and the War of 1812 that established the factory system in America. It was the War between the States with its artificial demand for woolens, munitions, foodstuffs, and many other commodities that gave industry an impetus which brought an Industrial Revolution and changed the picture of American society. This demand for manufactured commodities was maintained in the years following the war by the rapid growth of population, by the occupation of the trans-Mississippi West, by the expansion of transportation facilities, and in later years by a developing foreign market. It was aided by new inventions which produced new industries, and it was made possible, of course, by an abundance of natural resources—lumber, agricultural products, and minerals. It was also given some aid by a protective tariff. With the secession of the South in 1861, low-tariff southern Democrats withdrew from Congress and the way was cleared for a high tariff which has been maintained ever since. Before the War between the States industry was largely centered in the Northeast. In the years thereafter, industry spread westward and even into the South as it followed population, the sources of raw material or, in some cases, cheap labor. In addition, the development of American mechanical genius caused many a backyard shop to expand into a small factory. As the men in these shops invented and improved on inventions, their home towns became centers of growing industries which in their total added up to big business. The factories built to house the spreading industry drew large numbers of workers from rural districts. This concentration of population caused large cities to spring up. America was changing from a country of farms and small villages to one of large cities.

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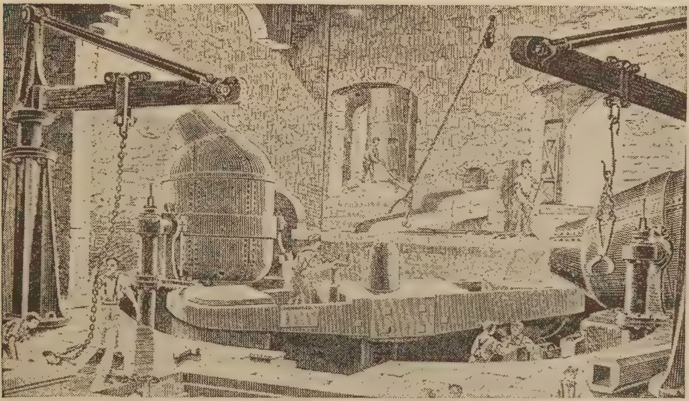
[1] David A. Wells, *Recent Economic Changes*, 65.

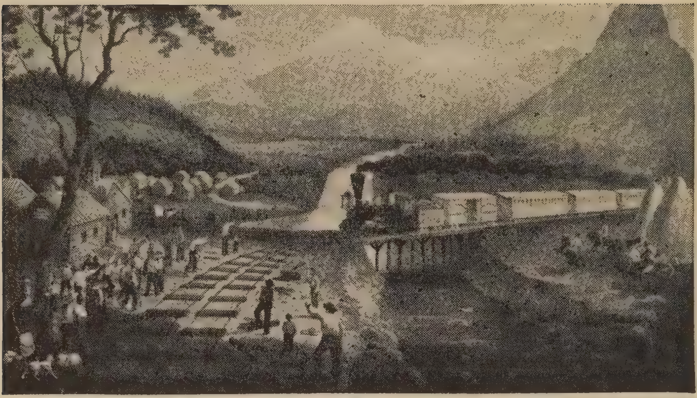
Steel

Leadership in the rapid development of American industry in the decades after the War between the States was taken by steel, meat-packing, and oil. Steel was the key industry that made so many others possible. Up to the 1860's steel was an expensive commodity used only for costly articles. In the 1850's William Kelly, an American, and Henry Bessemer, an Englishman, discovered a method of eliminating foreign substances by forcing a cold blast of air through the molten iron, after which carbon or other elements could be introduced to make the desired quality of steel.



Bettmann Archive

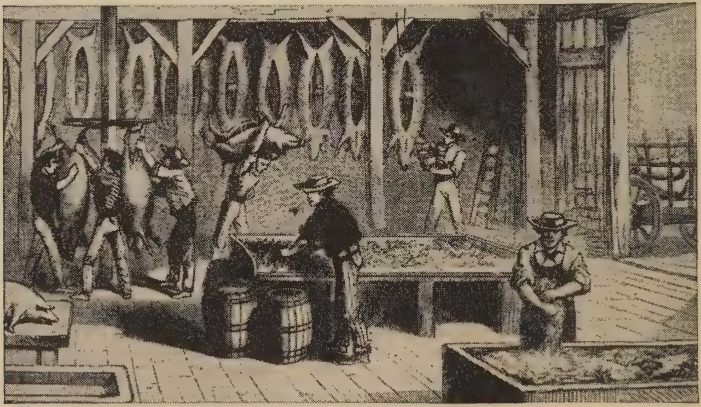
Such factories as this Bessemer factory in 1860 reduced the time for manufacture of steel from the three months formerly required to half an hour. Almost overnight, steel, or at least a crude form of it, became as cheap as iron. Steel mills sprang up like mushrooms. Between 1860 and 1880 the capitalization of iron and steel mills and the volume of their products increased 20 times and the number of employees from 22,000 to 141,000.



Bettmann Archive

Cheap steel became the basis for the tremendous expansion in industry and transportation. Steel rails and huge railroad engines made it possible to market the heavy commodities of American farms and factories. Without low cost steel, it would be hard to picture the age of machinery, of the automobile, the airplane, and the skyscraper.

Meat Packing



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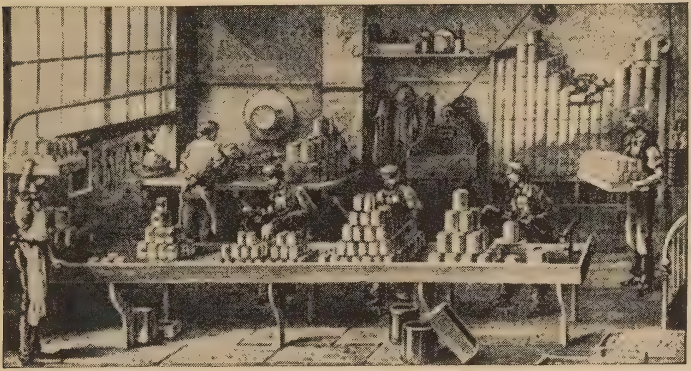
Another industry, particularly American in its size and rapid development, was the processing of meat. Of minor importance in 1860, the meat-packing industry soon pushed to the front and for half a century until 1919 it led all other manufacturing in the value of its products. This packing establishment of the Middle West, showing the cleaning and salting of hogs, was only one of many, the expansion of which was made possible by the rapidly expanding ranchers' frontier of the 1870's, by the spread of the railroad network throughout the cattle country—



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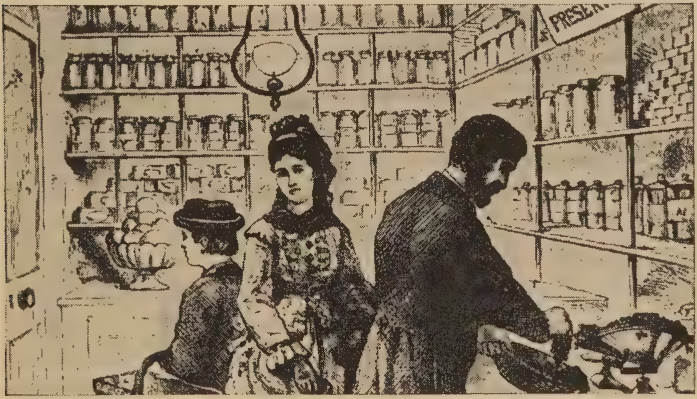
—by the invention of refrigeration, and by the wider use of canning. Indeed such early canning factories as this played a large part in the expansion of the meat-packing industry which was also given an impetus by an expanding European market and a growing market in the rapidly developing industrial cities of America. It fitted nicely into—



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—a new America of apartment-house dwellers and delicatessen stores and package groceries.

Oil

Even more spectacular was the rise of the oil industry. When Edwin Drake in 1859 bored his first well in northwestern Pennsylvania, mineral oil was little more than a quack medicine. Ten years later it had virtually eliminated vegetable and animal oils for lubrication and illumination. By 1870 refined oil had taken second place among the nation's exports. Steel, meat packing, and oil are but three of America's great basic industries, but the history of their expansion represents in a greater or less degree the story of many other American industries. They typify a new America, the child of the Industrial Revolution—an America of busy factories, of powerful capitalists, of great consolidations of wealth, and of growing cities teeming with millions of wage earners.

THE RAILROAD AGE

An industrial development of the type just described would, of course, be impossible without a simultaneous expansion of facilities for communication and transportation. A basis for this had been laid before the War between the States. As early as 1807 Robert Fulton demonstrated the practicability of the steamboat and in 1829 the Englishman, George Stephenson, successfully harnessed a steam engine to wheels revolving on rails. Samuel F. B. Morse invented the telegraph in 1832 and Cyrus W. Field laid the first successful Atlantic Cable in 1866. Long before the War between the States steamboats were plying on every river of any size and carrying much of the north-south traffic. By that time, likewise, a skeleton railroad system had been laid east of the Alleghenies and the principal passes across the mountains had been penetrated. Connection with the Middle West had already been established over routes later followed by the New York Central, the Pennsylvania, the Baltimore and Ohio and other systems.

Growth after War between the States

It was the task of the decades after the War between the States to fill out this system, to push into the Great Plains and to span the continent to the Pacific. These were the great years of American railroad building when the 30,000 miles of 1860 grew to almost 200,000 in 1900. While the North was engaged in the more prosaic business of expansion and improvement and the South in rebuilding her railroads destroyed by the War between the States, the eyes of the nation were fixed on the more spectacular projects of conquering the plains and reaching the Pacific. It was the lure of oriental trade and the discovery of gold in California that first awakened dreams of a transcontinental railroad. Only the rivalry between the North and South as to the route delayed the beginning of such a project. With secession of the South the way was open. Congress during the war chartered the Union Pacific, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, and the Northern Pacific, and endowed them with grants of millions of acres of public lands to encourage construction. In the case of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific it also made liberal loans. With these bounties and other kinds of aid the great transcontinental systems were pushed through in the two decades after the war and many subsidiary lines were built.[2]

These were the great days of railroads when railroad building probably dominated the minds of people more than any other aspect of our economic life. Every town or village believed that its future was assured if it could only be near or on a railroad. Federal and state governments generously subsidized the new companies; counties and towns subscribed liberally to stocks and bonds to encourage construction. The great figures in the economic world were not the industrialists, but the railroad magnates and builders, men like Leland Stanford, Collis P. Huntington, and James J. Hill. Small boys saw no brighter future than to be a conductor or an engineer.

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[2] Unlike the other transcontinentals, the Great Northern, constructed by James J. Hill and aided by Canadian and English capitalists, received no land grants.

The railroads were built, but the result was far from satisfactory. Immigrants furnished most of the hard labor, the public paid the bills, the owners reaped the profits. Many of the builders seemed more interested in immediate profits than in the future of the railroads. By contracting the building to construction companies, which they themselves owned, they took their profits in building at high costs, often leaving the railroad bankrupt before it was completed. Later the railroads often fell into the hands of speculators like Jay Gould or Daniel Drew who kicked them around for their own benefit and completed their financial ruin. For this the public was again to pay in the form of high rates and inefficient service. To public complaints the attitude of the railroad owners was briefly expressed in the alleged remark of Cornelius Vanderbilt, "The public be damned." But the bitterness of public disapproval, particularly among the farmers, was too deep to be ignored, and resulted, as we shall see, in the growth of state and federal regulation.

Consolidation of Railroads and Industry

The half century following the War between the States was not only a period of rapid development in transportation and industry, but it was also a period when both transportation and industry were welded into giant consolidations. There were many reasons for this tendency. Large corporations were in a better position than small companies to dictate prices to the producer of the raw materials which they used, to set prices for the consumer, to deal with bankers, and to handle labor. It was not, however, their fear of these groups that brought consolidation; it was the bitter competition with one another. Witnesses appearing before Congressional investigating committees testified repeatedly that the fundamental reason for consolidation was "competition so vigorous that profits of nearly all competing establishments were destroyed."[3] Competition, it appeared, was no longer the life but the death of trade.

Consolidation aimed not only to eliminate competition and secure greater profits, but also to ensure greater efficiency. The latter was desirable, particularly in the business of transportation. In railroads the development followed two courses—that of uniting railroads to form a continuous line of travel, and that of consolidating roads in a given geographic division. The first type of consolidation began before the War between the States and continued for many years. It is best illustrated by Vanderbilt's work in combining in the 1850's eleven little roads that had hitherto most inefficiently handled the traffic between Albany and Buffalo. The period of geographical consolidation also continued for many years. When it reached its climax in the early 1900's two-thirds of railroad mileage was in the hands of seven groups. The Vanderbilt roads controlled the northern routes from New York to Chicago, the Pennsylvania interests dominated the roads from Pennsylvania and Maryland to the Middle West. The Morgan roads and their affiliates controlled the Southeast, the Gould roads and the Rock Island system were powerful in the Mississippi Valley. Beyond the Mississippi the Hill roads had a monopoly of the Northwest, and the Harriman roads dominated the central and southern transcontinental routes.

Where there was competition for business between two points, as, for example, New York and Chicago, rates were often so low as to be ruinous to the railroads. Where there was no competition, particularly in the agricultural regions served by only one railroad, the railroads recompensed themselves by charging high rates. This power to make or break individuals or communities was obviously intolerable and led, as we shall see, to a revolt which finally brought state and federal control of rates and fares. But such control amounted to little until after the Hepburn Act of 1906. In the meantime, the continuous consolidation into geographic railroad empires largely eliminated competition between carriers and weakened the position of the farmer, the business man, and others who purchased transportation.

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[3] *Preliminary Report of the Industrial Commission*, 9.

THE AGE OF LAISSEZ-FAIRE

The development of industrial America and the methods that were followed can be understood only by comprehending the philosophy or the attitude taken by the average person toward the economic life of the nation. Economists have used the term *laissez-faire* to describe it. This is a doctrine which holds that economic life should go on with as little interference as possible from the government. The government should play the role of an umpire in a baseball game—enforce the few rules that are necessary and let the game go as it pleases. As far as the economic life was concerned, the less government the better. There should be few, if any, regulations of industry, commerce or labor.

Origins of the Theory

The idea of *laissez-faire* came from a number of sources. First of all, it was a reaction from the innumerable government regulations of industry during the Middle Ages, regulations which seemed unduly to hamper the rapid economic expansion of modern times. In the second place, economic thinkers of the late 1700's and early 1800's expressed the theory so clearly that it became a gospel to the rising merchant capitalists and industrialists who profited from it. The most famous of these economists, Adam Smith, insisted that, if left alone, each individual would employ his talents and his capital in a way most advantageous to himself. His efforts might be wholly selfish, but if each individual concerned himself with the thing which he could do the best, without interference, the final result would be the best for society. To this was added another group of ideas derived from Charles Darwin's book, *Origin of Species* (1859)—the "survival of the fittest." In the struggle for existence, according to this theory, those best equipped in an environment are most likely to survive. If there are great inequalities of wealth, if many are destroyed or else doomed to a life of hardship and suffering, it is as nature determined it. It is the person's own fault if he does not rise to the top.

Applications

In our modern complicated economic life these ideas are not as widely held as they once were. Nevertheless, they still persist in spite of changed circumstances and every new government regulation must meet the opposition of advocates of *laissez-faire*. In nineteenth century America, however, the doctrine of *laissez-faire* held almost complete sway among those who controlled politics and business. To the rising capitalist, and, in fact, to the average citizen, it seemed not only unnecessary, but bad economics, for government to regulate private business and capital. Capital should not be impeded in the development of the vast natural resources. It was believed that there was enough for all and that anyone who was frugal, industrious, and ambitious could succeed. This point of view was strengthened by the pioneer individualism of a frontier people who demanded utmost freedom of action. It was also strengthened by the ease with which great wealth was created and the natural resources snatched from government control.

Inconsistencies

The doctrine of *laissez-faire*, however, was never so sacred but that its strongest advocates sometimes violated it. From 1861 on manufacturers maintained a high tariff system which prevented free competition with the rest of the world. Railroads gladly accepted hand-outs in the form of land grants. During these years the most valuable of the oil, timber, and mineral lands were occupied under federal land acts, bought in, or obtained by fraud. This might seem to be free competition to those who benefited, but the average citizen became convinced that victory went only to the strongest and most unscrupulous. As late as 1910 a well-known English journalist described the United States as "an enormously rich country overrun by a horde of robber barons."

As the years went on, more and more people became convinced that the great consolidations of wealth and power were seriously limiting opportunities under *laissez-faire*. Moreover, competition among industries and railroads was becoming so keen as to threaten to destroy them. Only by giving up free competition could capital and industry save itself. This they did by consolidating competing business units or railroads and by creating monopolies. To a believer in *laissez-faire* this might seem a perfectly natural and inevitable development. The average citizen considered it a dangerous tendency and toward the end of the century he tried to do something about it.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE LAST FRONTIER

America in the days before the War between the States was largely a nation of plantations and farms. In the hands of plantation owners and farmers rested the political and economic power of the nation. The War between the States destroyed the plantation owners and the Industrial Revolution shifted economic and political power from farmers to the owners of capital, factories, and transportation facilities. This power, was, of course, increased by the growth and consolidation of banks, industries, and railroads into larger units. By the end of the century a relatively small group of men were in a position to determine the prices charged for industrial commodities, for transportation, and for capital. At the same time they were also in a position to determine the amount which they would pay for raw materials and labor. This shift bore heavily upon two groups in particular, wage earners and farmers. Both attempted to save themselves from the inferior position in which they found themselves; both tried to bring back some equality of opportunity. The story of the farmers' revolt we will tell briefly in this chapter and the rise of the wage earners in the next.

Expansion of Agriculture

While industry was growing to a dominant position in our economic life, agriculture was also expanding rapidly. These were the decades when miners, ranchers, and farmers moved into the vast region of the Great Plains and the Rockies to people America's last frontier. In the half century from 1860 to 1910 the number of farms increased from two million to six million. Some 500 million acres of land were brought under cultivation, an area almost as large as western Europe. It took the American people more than 200 years to occupy the region east of the Mississippi; in the 30 years after the War between the States they spread over a much larger area. The entire population of the United States in 1860 was only 30 millions, but in 1910 there were 50 million living on farms or in villages supported by agriculture.

The causes for this rapid expansion are not hard to find. First of all was the land policy of the federal government. In 1862 Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act which granted a quarter section (160 acres) free to a head of a family who was a citizen of the United States or to any one who had filed his intention of becoming one. Residence of five years (cut in 1912 to three years) on the land was required to obtain ownership, good faith to be proven by cultivation. In later years this act was made more liberal in various ways, one of them being a grant of a larger acreage in regions where more land was necessary to support a family. Another important influence was the building of the trans-Mississippi railroads. To encourage their construction the federal government donated about 155,000,000 acres, loaned money in the case of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific, and aided in many other ways. These "land grant railroads" naturally wanted to sell this land and to people the region through which they ran. As a consequence, they spread their advertising and propaganda throughout the eastern states and Europe in the hope of bringing settlers to take up land along their lines. In this they were aided by the propaganda bureaus of the various states.

Rapid movement into the western states and territories was also stimulated by a developing market for foodstuffs in Europe and America as the Industrial Revolution turned these regions into great industrial areas sprinkled with rapidly growing cities. America during these years borrowed large amounts of capital from Europe to finance the expansion of industry and transportation facilities and paid for it by the surplus food of the western plains. Besides these causes there were many others to explain this rapid advance. The invention in the 1870's of a practical and cheap barbed wire fence enabled the farmer to fence in his land, shut out the roving cattle of the rancher, and push the farming frontier westward. In similar manner, the invention of cheap mechanical windmills enabled both farmers and ranchers to push into the dry land of the Great Plains and obtain at least enough water to maintain life. There was also the development of more scientific farming, particularly of the type which permitted the growing of crops in extremely dry regions (dry farming).

Effect of the Homestead Act

It is impossible to determine the relative importance of these various causes. The old idea that this great migration was mainly influenced by the Homestead Act has been largely discarded by students of the westward movement. First of all, the best of the western lands was generally not available for free settlement under the Homestead Acts. It had been given to the railroads and the states, to the land-grant colleges or was still held by the government for sale.[4] The homesteaders usually got only the second best land. Moreover, the actual figures tell the story. Between 1862 and 1927 only 1,400,443 entries accounting for 228,742,000 acres were made under the Homestead Acts, an average of 23,340 entries and 3,812,000 acres a year. The West, however, was occupied with much greater rapidity. The railroads alone were given almost half as much land as eventually was occupied under the Homestead Acts, and this land was largely taken up in the earlier years. The larger part of the Homestead grants was made after 1890, the year which the Census Bureau took as marking the end of the frontier. Webb, the leading historian of the Great Plains, goes so far as to say that "It was barbed wire and not the railroads or the Homestead law that made it possible for the farmers to resume, or at least accelerate, their march across the prairies and onto the Plains. Even the fertile Prairie Plains were but sparsely settled until after the advent of barbed wire."[5] Another authority insists that "Barbed wire and windmills made the settlement of the West possible." Such are the difficulties of determining the cause of great events.

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[4] When the federal government gave land to promote railroad building, it retained alternate sections (square miles) and sold them to settlers rather than granting them free under the Homestead Act.

[5] Walter P. Webb, *The Great Plains*, 317.

The Frontier and Labor

It may be wise to pause here for a moment to discuss the significance of the frontier advance on American labor. In the last chapter we pointed out that few wage earners themselves went to the agricultural frontier. On the other hand, many men and women who might otherwise have gone to the cities did go west and so eliminated themselves as competitors in the labor market. This may have had some influence in keeping the wage scales higher than they would otherwise have been. It is also true that wage earners always had the possibility of going west and the feeling that it was possible may have softened the discontent over hard conditions. In any event, the West was rapidly growing up and there was work for skilled labor in the developing towns and cities.

It is also probable that the expanding West delayed somewhat the development of labor unions in America. In England, agricultural land was being "enclosed" for sheep farming and agricultural wage earners literally driven from the land to seek work in industrial communities. This speeded the development of guilds and later of labor unions. In America the situation was quite the opposite. Here there was a vast amount of unoccupied land with government, railroads, and private speculators eager for the people to settle on it. After the Homestead Act of 1862 land could be obtained free of charge. This tended to spread the population, increase the area of agriculture, and maintain agriculture as an important part of our economic life.

THE FARMERS' WOES

Whatever the causes for the rapid westward movement, America's last frontier was largely occupied in the three decades from 1870 to 1900. Perhaps the occupation was too rapid. Despite the rapidly growing market for wheat and other commodities, there were times when the production of foodstuffs was too great for the demand and prices collapsed. Inventions and improvements in agricultural machinery, particularly in mechanical sowing and reaping (gang plows, harvesters, twine binders), made it possible for fewer farmers to open up large areas.

Climate

More important than this in accounting for the troubles of the farmer was his ignorance of the soil and climate in the region into which he was migrating. From the 98th meridian west to the foothills of the Rockies the rainfall averages from 10 to 20 inches a year.[6] This is less than sufficient for agriculture as practiced in more humid regions. A billion acres, 50 per cent of the continental United States, although often of great fertility, is generally deficient in water. Much of it, on the other hand, is ideal for ranching. Yet it was into this region, encouraged by the liberal rainfall of the early 'eighties, that hundreds of thousands of farmers penetrated. When the drought and the lean years came, many of the farmers were ruined. Not only were *they* ruined, but also the land. When drought was accompanied by wind storms the top soil of the plowed land was whipped up by the winds and scattered for hundreds of miles. When these periodic droughts occurred the frontier retreated, only to surge forward again in the years of greater rainfall.

Credit

The farmer in the West, however, did not lay his woes on over-production or lack of rainfall, but upon the high prices which he paid for money (interest rates), for manufactured goods, and for transportation facilities. If these prices could be lowered and made more reasonable, he believed that he might make a profit. First of all, let us examine the problem of money and credit. Generally speaking, the West was settled by poor men and on borrowed money. In the boom days of the War between the States and immediately thereafter money was cheap and easily obtained. It was a period of inflation. Farmers pouring into the West borrowed to purchase land, live stock, and machinery, and to buy necessities to keep them going until their first crop was raised. This boom collapsed after the panic of 1873 and prices went down. At the same time the government began a definite policy of contracting the currency, which meant deflation and low prices.

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[6] The 98th meridian cuts north and south across eastern North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska, Central Kansas and Oklahoma and eastern Texas.

The period of inflation was over. The farmers who had borrowed when wheat sold at $1.50 a bushel might have to pay back their loans and their interest charges with wheat selling at 75 cents. This they found impossible to do; many went bankrupt and lost their farms.[7] Moreover, during these years, the farmer never had adequate credit facilities. The eastern merchant in cities with good banks might borrow for 5 or 6 per cent interest. The farmer on the frontier usually had to pay loan agencies who dealt in eastern money from 8 to 12 per cent.

The Farmer and Industry

The problem of the declining prices for agricultural commodities was bad enough. What made the situation worse was the fact that prices of manufactured commodities did not decline at an equal rate. The farmer must buy as well as sell. If the prices of what he sells are low, the prices of what he buys must also be low or he is soon in trouble. The prices of manufactured commodities (clothing, household goods, farm machinery, fertilizer) did decline; but not so rapidly or so far as did those of agricultural products. The reason for this, the farmers correctly believed, was the development of monopolies which artificially kept up prices.

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[7] This can be simply illustrated by the case of the farmer who borrowed $10,000 at 8 per cent interest with wheat selling at $1 a bushel. His yearly interest would be $800 and he would have to raise 800 bushels of wheat to pay it. Supposing wheat should drop to 50 cents a bushel. This would mean that he must raise 1600 bushels to pay his interest, put twice as much land under cultivation to raise it and work twice as hard. In most cases this was impossible.

To add to his woes were the abuses and high-handed practices of the railroads. The farmer raising commercial crops was utterly dependent upon the railroad to carry them to the market. If the rates were reasonable and the service efficient and given to all without discrimination, the farmer had no complaint. Such was not the case in the years 1860 to 1900.

Railroads in general charged all the traffic would bear rather than a fair price for the service rendered. Where competition existed between railroads, they charged low rates to shippers and then took it out on farmers who lived where they had access to only one railroad. Different shippers were charged different prices and often the railroads charged more for a short haul than a long. Railroads were often mismanaged, indifferent to public needs, and guilty of political bribery to obtain favors. It was this inefficiency, discrimination, corruption, and high rates that often meant the difference between success and failure to the farmers.

Attempts at Relief

Against these abuses the farmers rose in revolt. Through the Patrons of Husbandry or "Grange," a farmers' organization which grew rapidly in the 1870's, they struck at the railroads. Laws were pushed through many state legislatures to control railroad practices, particularly passenger fares and freight rates. When the state laws failed in their object, they fought for and obtained federal regulation in the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887. In a similar way they struck at monopoly prices through state laws and finally through the Sherman Anti-Trust laws of 1890.

During this period they also waged a continuous fight to promote inflation. The first effort was to print more paper money. Unsuccessful in this, they turned to silver and sought to revive the unlimited coinage of the silver dollar at the old ratio of 16 to 1.[8] The battle, as we shall see, came to a climax in the campaign of 1896. In all of these campaigns the farmers received various kinds of help from a number of non-agricultural groups, most important of which was labor.

THE CLIMAX OF DISCONTENT

Railroad abuses, monopoly practices, and the decline of agricultural prices were not the only problems that confronted the nation in the decade after the War between the States. The high tariff of the War between the States maintained in the post-war years aroused great opposition. It split the Republican party in 1872 and was a major economic and political issue in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties.[9] Political corruption in the Grant administration brought a demand for civil service reform which made real progress after the assassination of President Garfield. The growing conflict between capital and labor, dramatized in the great railroad strike of 1878, the Homestead strike of 1892 and the Pullman strike of 1894 made it clear that the Industrial Revolution had intensified in many ways an old problem.

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[8] Space is lacking in this book to discuss the technical aspects of inflation and deflation. They are usually discussed in textbooks in United States History. See H. U. Faulkner, *American Economic History* (5th ed.), Chap. 25, or Faulkner and Kepner, *America, Its History and People* (3rd ed.), pp. 477–487.

[9] Republican industrialists argued that a high tariff protected American industries against the cheaper costs (including cheaper wages) paid by European manufacturers. This made it possible for American manufacturers to keep in business and to pay higher wages to American workmen. Although organized labor in America knew that high tariffs raised the prices of many commodities which they bought, they generally sympathized with the arguments of the protectionists on the grounds that tariffs protected them in their own wages and jobs.

Farmers and Labor in Politics

Economic problems are inevitably reflected in politics. This is particularly true in a democratic nation and the United States was no exception. Since the major parties ordinarily tried to avoid these problems, the burden of agitation fell upon the third parties. With the exception of the Prohibition party, these third parties in the years after the War between the States were either labor or farmers' parties. Sometimes these groups consolidated for both industrial workers and farmers were against railroad, industrial, and land monopolies, and both groups were interested in democratic political reform. Permanent unions between the two groups, however, were difficult to maintain. The farmers were interested in selling their own products at high prices and in purchasing industrial commodities at low prices. Wage earners, on the other hand, wanted to buy their food at cheap prices and at the same time to increase their wages. High wages and cheap industrial products were not always possible.

It was a group of labor unions, loosely federated into the National Labor Union, which began the battle on the economic front when it organized in 1872 the National Reform party. Although it demanded social reforms, its chief emphasis was upon reform of the currency. Four years later the farmers organized the Independent National party, better known as the Greenback party, to agitate for inflation by means of more paper money. The two parties joined together in 1878 into the Greenback Labor party which demanded inflation, an income tax, and reform in the currency and land policies. This party achieved considerable strength in the late 'seventies under its leader, James B. Weaver, but declined in the early 'eighties. Its place was taken in 1888 by the Union Labor party which opposed land monopoly and the importation of contract labor, and advocated government ownership of railroads and telegraph lines, a graduated income tax, women suffrage, and direct election of United States Senators.

The People's Party

In the meantime various farmers' organizations were appearing in the South and West to take the place of the Grange, which had collapsed in the early 'eighties. These organizations claimed a membership of 300,000 by 1890 and two years later formally organized the People's party. Its main objective was inflation through silver, but its platform included demands of the Union Labor party and others—government ownership of railroads and telegraphs, an income tax, postal savings banks, and government land only for actual settlers. A further set of resolutions advocated abolition of private detective agencies (used chiefly against workers), immigration restriction, an 8-hour day for government employees, the secret ballot, the initiative and referendum, and a constitutional amendment providing for a single term for the President and the popular election of United States Senators.

These were the chief demands, as far as we can discover them in the third party platforms, which both farmer and laborer advocated to solve their major problems. They came directly from the social and economic discontent of the decades after the War between the States. Considered radical in their day, most of these demands have since been achieved. They are important milestones on the long road toward a better way of life.

Despite the long years of agitation and unrest, the picture seemed brighter as the nation entered the last decade of the century. For the farmers, the year 1890 was the most prosperous they had experienced for many years and the long period of declining prices seemed to have ended. In fact, the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890 gave hope for future inflation. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act of that year went far to lift from the masses the fear of big business and monopoly. Federal regulation of railroads had started with the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887. The high tariff was unpopular with many but the election of Cleveland, a low tariff Democrat, in 1892 gave hope of some reduction. The People's party in 1892 had elected five Senators and ten Representatives to Congress and hundreds of state and local officials. Reform, long agitated, appeared to have been finally achieved, and a better day seemed close at hand.

The bright prospects of the early 'nineties, however, quickly faded. The panic of 1893 started agricultural prices on a new decline. Repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act and Cleveland's maintenance of the gold standard ended any hope of inflation. The Supreme Court's decision, holding the income tax passed by the Democratic Congress in 1894 unconstitutional, was a bitter disappointment. The failure of the Homestead strike of 1892 smashed labor organization in the great steel industry and the activity of the federal government in breaking the Pullman strike of 1894 left labor demoralized and embittered.

The Election of 1896

A major depression like that following the panic of 1893 alone is enough to bring a political upheaval. To this was added the disappointment and the blasted hopes of millions who had believed a better day was at hand. In the mid-term elections of 1894 the Democrats lost control of Congress and the Populists (People's party) increased their representation. It seemed clear that the Republicans would win in 1896, but there were few who expected the campaign would mark the climax of the long agitation for economic reform. In 1896 the Republicans based their campaign essentially on two planks, the high tariff and the gold standard, and nominated William McKinley, chiefly known as an advocate of a high tariff. The Democrats took over the chief demand of the Populists, free and unlimited coinage of gold and silver at a ratio of 16 to 1, and nominated William Jennings Bryan, a leading advocate of "free silver." The Populists, finding their chief plank removed from under them, endorsed Bryan.

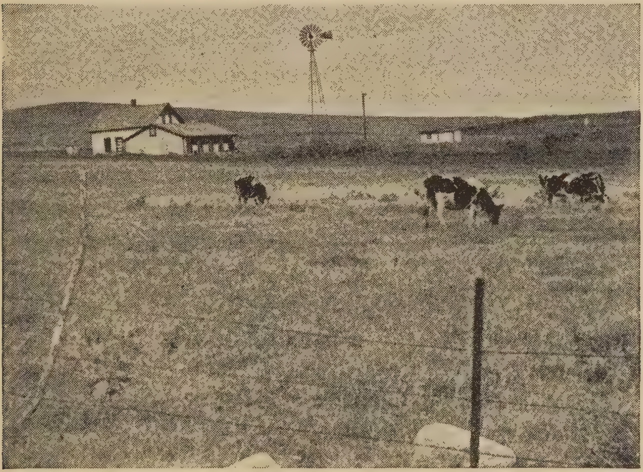
On the face of it, the campaign of 1896 was fought over the problem of inflation. But the battle cries of "gold standard" and "16 to 1" were but symbols of a more fundamental conflict. On the one hand were the great interests engaged in transportation, industry, and finance, the "money power" of the new industrialism which had grown so rapidly in the decades after the War between the States; on the other hand were the farmers of the West and South and the "common people" of all sections who sensed the campaign as a battle against the evils and inequities of the new industrialism.

No campaign in American history was ever more bitterly fought. Greater funds, better organization, and a split in the Democratic party gave the victory to McKinley. Bryan carried the West and South[10] but McKinley the rest of the country and a majority of the votes. What appeared to be a great economic and political revolt was quelled. The Democratic party by going radical pushed the Republican party into a conservative position and this party won. Victory prepared the way for a higher tariff, for the greatest period of business consolidation which the nation had yet seen and for an era of economic imperialism. Shortly after the election new discoveries of gold brought higher prices and prosperity for the farmers. It appeared that the great movement for reform was ended. But scarcely a decade later the old problems of railroad regulation, monopoly control, and tariff legislation were again to the fore and a new demand for reform developed far wider in scope than that of the 1880's and 1890's. The part played by labor during these important years will be told in the next chapter.

[10] Except Kentucky, California, Oregon, and North Dakota. McKinley won by a popular vote of 7,036,638 to 6,467,946 and an electoral vote of 271 to 176.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Secure an outline map of the United States and on it show the avenues by which mid-western produce went to market before 1840 (the major river system). On the same map place the routes of the Baltimore and Ohio, the Pennsylvania, and the New York Central railroads.
2. Using this map, prepare a report on the effect of the railroads on relations between the South, Midwest, and East.
3. On the same outline map or another one like it, show the routes of the Union Pacific, the Santa Fe, and the Great Northern railroads. Draw little figures to show the sorts of commodities each railroad chiefly carried.
4. Prepare a class report on railroad abuses. Look up the *Crédit Mobilier*, the careers of Jay Gould, Daniel Drew and Jim Fiske, and investigate the conditions which led to the creation of the Interstate Commerce Commission.
5. Report to the class the story of Coxey's Army, and other evidence of popular unrest around 1893.



6. This scene of a prairie home in North Dakota shows two things which many historians believe were important in the settlement of the West. Identify them and explain their significance. (*Charles Phelps Cushing*)

CHAPTER V

Rise of National Unions and Early Efforts Toward Federation

EFFECT OF THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES

IN THE LAST CHAPTER WE INTERRUPTED THE HISTORY OF American labor to describe the Industrial Revolution and so prepare the background for the story which follows. We can now return and pick up the threads of the labor history where we dropped them in the late 1850's. Like all depressions, that which followed the panic of 1857 had a disastrous effect upon labor. Reduced wages and unemployment brought distress and disorganized the reviving unions.[1] To add to their difficulties came the War between the States in 1861. War invariably brings increased demand for workers and higher wages. But it also brings higher prices for commodities and higher taxes. In the end the wage earner usually loses rather than gains. Such was the effect of the War between the States.

On Prices

During the war prices more than doubled. The reasons were the usual ones—increased demand for commodities and inflation of the currency. The government was now in the market as a purchaser of munitions, foodstuffs, and other commodities to support the million men in the army, and civilians were competing to buy what was left. At the same time the government refused longer to pay in gold and silver and printed paper money, legal tender but with no backing in gold and silver. Higher prices due to increased demand for commodities and to inflation might not have injured the wage earner if wages had risen proportionately, but this rarely happens in a period of rapidly increasing prices. During the first two years of the war, wages remained almost stationary; it was not until 1863 that they began to climb. As a whole, prices increased approximately 100 per cent and wages somewhat over 60 per cent. Except for the fact that employment increased, the economic position of the wage earner declined during the years of conflict.

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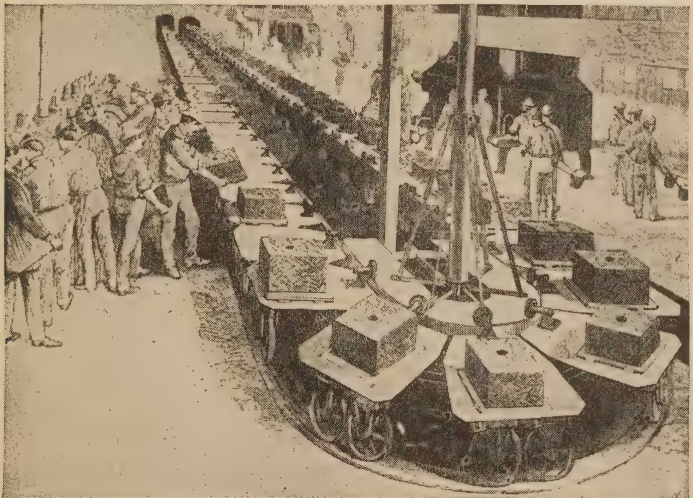
[1] Only three small national unions survived the panic of 1857: the Printers, Stone Cutters and Hat Finishers. In 1859 the molders and machinists were organized on a national basis.

On Wages



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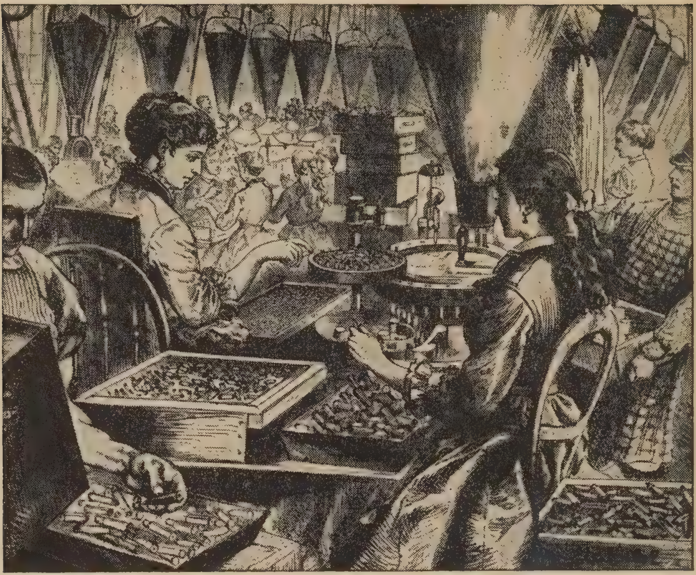
Failure of wages to keep pace with prices is explained by the introduction of labor-saving machinery, such as this early conveying belt in an iron foundry,—



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—and by the employment of women and children, as in this cartridge factory.

Wages were also kept low by the fact that about 800,000 immigrants arrived in this country during the war years, a number sufficiently large to fill a big part of the gap which the war had made in the ranks of labor. As the demand for labor increased toward the end of the conflict, Congress passed an alien contract immigration law in 1864. This allowed persons in the United States to make contracts with foreign workers to bring them to this country and bind them to work for a term to pay for their passage money. This method of obtaining cheap labor, reminiscent of the indentured servant system of the colonial days, not only tended to keep wages low during the last year of the War between the States, but for two decades after. One more fact should also be remembered. Unlike the policy followed in the Second World War, the federal government made no effort to prevent inflation or to protect the standards of the wage earner.

On Union Organization

Lag in wages along with the fear of a glutted labor market at the end of the war brought by 1863 a revival of interest in union organization. In the two years following, several hundred local unions or city associations of one kind or another were organized and at least 10 national unions.[2] By the end of the 'sixties not less than 32 national unions had been formed based on various trades or crafts. By that time possibly 300,000 wage earners were included in some sort of union and labor papers were springing up in all parts of the country. Organization was again on the march and with it a widespread demand for higher wages and better working conditions.

Another factor undoubtedly helped to revive the interest in labor organization—the growing power of capital. While the standard of living of the wage earner declined, the relative strength of the industrialist and capitalist increased. Never had the railroads and industries been so prosperous or their profits so high. Never had the government been so free in granting land to promote railroad building. New railroads were constructed, new mines opened up, and new industries, such as petroleum, developed. Telegraph lines and railroads were consolidated into larger and stronger units. Agriculture boomed and the westward movement was speeded. In fact, almost every group but the wage earner seemed to be prospering and moving ahead.

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[2] These included the Plasterers' National Union, the National Union of Journeymen Curriers, the Ship Carpenters' and Caulkers' International Union, the National Union of Cigar Makers, the Coach Makers' International Union, the Journeymen Painters' National Union, National Union of Heaters, Tailors' National Union, Carpenters' and Joiners' International Union, and Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union. The term international as used by American labor unions means that they include Canadian locals.

CONDITION OF LABOR 1865 TO 1900

Despite the revival of labor organization in the last years of the War between the States and immediately thereafter, the general picture was far from bright. The passing of the small factory and the growing consolidation of industry inevitably reduced the wage earner to the position of a small cog in a great industrial machine. Opportunities for advancement were growing less. The Homestead Act had done him little good, for the typical wage earner knew nothing of agriculture. His experience hardly fitted him for pioneering on the Great Plains, and he could hardly save enough from his small wages to transport his family and finance the early years on a frontier farm. In any event, the frontier was coming to an end and whatever opportunities were afforded to escape from his environment seemed rapidly closing.

Wages and Hours

Moreover, the condition of labor was dark enough. Despite the long agitation for the 10-hour day, the average work day in 1865 was 11 hours. Many worked much longer; the steel industry, for example, did not end the 12-hour day until 1923. Until prices broke after the end of the War between the States and particularly after the panic of 1873, wages lagged behind. Agricultural laborers in 1880 received on an average $1.31 per day, cotton mill operatives $1.24, shoemakers $1.76, printers $2.18, carpenters $2.42 and masons $2.79. Prices were, of course, much lower than today, but these wages by no means afforded a decent standard of living. The increasing use of women and children in industry kept wages down, as did the large immigration throughout these years. Not only were hours long and wages low, but discipline was rigid and arbitrary. Working conditions were often unhealthy and unsafe, and the rules humiliating. In many communities workers were forced to trade at company-owned stores and purchase at high prices. Laws on the statute books favored the employer rather than the worker. The courts, generally speaking, seemed more sympathetic toward the employer than the worker. Efforts at unionization were often prevented by forcing workers to sign a pledge that they would not join a union ("iron-clad oath").[3] Union members were discharged and then blacklisted to prevent their subsequent reemployment.[4]

These and many other grievances were behind the efforts at organization during the decades after the War between the States and they are fundamental in understanding the whole history of the labor movement. Despite continued efforts at organization, much political activity, and some labor legislation, these grievances were still present at the end of the century. This does not mean that the position of the wage earner did not improve during these years. From the end of the War between the States to about 1896 prices declined more rapidly than wages, leaving real wages higher at the end of the period than at the beginning. Likewise the average work day had declined from 11 hours in 1865 to somewhat less than 10 in 1900. The situation in other ways had also improved. Some of this improvement came from conditions over which labor had little influence, as, for example, the decline in prices. Much of it was due to labor agitation and labor organization.

Uncertainty as to Type of Organization

Part of the difficulty of workers in meeting the problems of the new industrial age was their own uncertainty and confusion. Most workers believed that a better future lay in organization, but they were uncertain as to the type of organization, the objectives to be obtained and the methods to be used. One group of labor, mainly skilled workmen, such as painters, molders, blacksmiths, and carpenters, wanted strong national craft organizations to work for immediate objects—shorter hours, higher wages, better working conditions, special laws affecting labor. They were not primarily interested in general reforms to improve the world. Their ideal was "old-line unionism" to better specific conditions in their own craft. Another group, much like the labor reformers of the days before the War between the States, was concerned with larger economic and social questions, such as concentration of wealth, the growing power of corporations, the position of labor and how it might be bettered by a program of general social reform. Farther to the left were a few unions and groups, largely composed of immigrant workers enthusiastic over the ideas of socialism then emerging in Europe, who would establish national unions committed to socialist reforms. Each of these groups with their differing ideas as to methods and objectives found expression in organization. Old-line craft unionists eventually organized the American Federation of Labor; the general reform groups organized the Knights of Labor and the Socialists founded political parties.

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[3] Known in later years as the "yellow-dog contract."

[4] These blacklists of men considered undesirable by employers were freely circulated and such men found it difficult to get another job in the same industry. How it worked on the railroads can be seen from testimony given before the Industrial Commission. Reprinted in F. Flügel and H. U. Faulkner, *Readings in the Economic and Social History of the United States*, 842–844.

From the beginning labor was uncertain as to the best methods to win their demands. Some believed in political action and in the organization of political parties; others would limit themselves to strictly trade union action. Certain leaders would organize on strictly craft lines, that is, organize workers of each craft in their own union. Others believed that all workers in an industry, whatever their job might be, should be in the same union.[5] Others would pay no attention to craft or industry but would organize workers, whoever they might be, into unions based on locality.

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[5] For a more complete description of the differences between craft and industrial unions, see below, footnote, p. 150. See also pp. 223–224.

Differences of opinions of this kind help to explain the delay in the development of strong and powerful organizations.

Individualism Among Workers

Another factor which helps to explain the delay in union development was the typical American psychology or attitude of mind. The rapid expansion and opportunities of a new country tended to make the American an individualist. He might be willing to join unions but he disliked subordinating his own desires or his personal interests to the greater welfare of the whole group. Moreover, there was little class consciousness among American workers. Joining a union seemed to commit the worker to a certain job and a certain type of life. America, on the other hand, was a land of opportunity, a country with many chances to rise in the economic scale. Many Americans were, in fact, moving from the wage-earning groups to the middle class. Their places were continuously filled by immigrants often unskilled and with little or no union background. There were, of course, economic classes in America as elsewhere, but they were in a fluid state. American society cut across class lines, and the idea of permanent economic and social classes was repugnant to most Americans.

FIRST EFFORTS TOWARD FEDERATION

Although the development of national unions made some headway in the 1860's, these unions themselves were often weak and little more than paper organizations. Quite as important during these years was the formation of city trades' assemblies composed of representatives of the various local unions. What American labor badly needed was some national federation which would bring the various organizations together and strengthen the influence of labor in our national life. There were, of course, conflicts between the interests of various unions, but there were also issues on which they could unite. One was the demand for the 8-hour day, continuing the 10-hour fight of the 1840's and 50's.

The National Labor Union

Far-seeing labor leaders realized the need of a national federation and in 1866 issued a call for a congress at Baltimore. From it evolved the National Labor Union which occupied the center of the labor stage until 1872. Unlike later federations it was essentially a politico-reform organization. It committed itself to arbitration rather than strikes, land reform (land only to actual settlers and no donations to corporations), coöperatives, the 8-hour day, and the organization of a political party. It was also concerned with the currency problem and the new national debt. Says one labor historian: "There was nothing to differentiate this new society from the industrial congresses of the 'forties and 'fifties and the politico-reform agitations that had marked the course of the American labor movement from the start, nothing but the change from a 10-hour to an 8-hour demand, and the addition of the national debt to the reformers' worries."[6]

It is obvious that the National Labor Union was essentially a reform organization. This was due in part to the fact that the labor leaders of the time were reformers as well as trade unionists, men who believed that the future of labor rested upon great national reforms. Typical of them was William H. Sylvis (1828–1869), founder of the Iron Moulders International Union, and one-time President of the National Labor Union. Sylvis believed profoundly in the reforms advocated by the National Labor Union. A prolific writer and an able orator, Sylvis supported them, both within the political parties and the unions. When he died at forty-one at the height of his career, Sylvis was the best known labor leader of his time.

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[6] N. J. Ware, *The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860–1925* (1929), 7.

The National Labor Union reached the logical culmination of its career when in 1872 it organized the National Labor Reform party and nominated Charles O'Conor, a New York lawyer, for the presidency. O'Conor received only 30,000 votes and the new party was absorbed six years later by the Greenbackers under a new name of Greenback Labor party.

When the National Labor Union threw its energies largely into politics many of the unions deserted it. Unsuccessful coöperative experiments and unsuccessful strikes helped to finish its career. Nevertheless, it had for a brief period held together 600,000 trade unionists, kept alive the idea of federation on a national scale, and demonstrated that such federation was possible. It had also exerted some influence in obtaining the 8-hour day for government employees in 1868. The very manner of its death was a warning to labor. Too much politics had killed it, and its fate helps to explain the hesitancy of unions in later years to organize their own political parties.

THE ORIGIN OF THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR

After the death of the National Labor Union various "industrial congresses" were held (1873–1875) in an effort to revive the principal of national federation, but federation divorced from politics. These efforts failed. A new organization, however, had already appeared which was destined to play an important role in American labor history. This was the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor which for more than a decade filled the need of a great national labor organization. Unlike the National Labor Union, the Knights of Labor did not start as a federation of already existing locals, city trades assemblies, and national unions. It began as a single small local union and then expanded slowly as new unions in various crafts joined it. In brief, it was organized from the bottom up rather than from the top down.

In no industry were workers more exploited by war contractors than in the clothing industry, and few industries suffered more severely from the post-war let down. In 1869 nine garment workers organized in Philadelphia the Knights of Labor, an organization which ten years later was to dominate the labor world. The leaders were Uriah S. Stephens, the first Master Workman, and James L. Wright, the first treasurer. Stephens, a man of strong religious sentiments, had been educated for the ministry, taught school, and learned the tailoring trade. His background included travel in the West Indies, Central America, and five years on the Pacific Coast. A handsome man, with fine presence and oratorical ability, Stephens was a natural leader. He liked to associate with other men and joined various fraternal organizations, including the Masons. Like Sylvis, Stephens was a reformer and politician as well as a labor leader. In fact, he resigned his position as Grand Master of the Knights of Labor in 1878 to devote his entire time to an unsuccessful campaign for Congress on the Greenback Labor ticket. The ritual of the Knights stemmed largely from Stephens' religious and fraternal background. The emphasis of the organization upon general reforms as well as trade union activities fitted nicely into Stephens' own belief of the functions of a labor union.

Secrecy

The emphasis of the Knights of Labor upon secrecy was a natural result of the difficulties faced by labor in the hard years following the panic of 1873 when workers were harassed by lockouts, blacklists and legal persecution. It was a time, as one labor leader wrote, when "a great deal of bitterness was evinced against trade union organizations, and men were blacklisted to an extent hardly ever equalled."[7] As the Knights explained in their secret ritual: "Open and public association having failed after a struggle of centuries to protect or advance the interests of labor we have lawfully constituted this assembly and in using this power of organized effort and coöperation we but imitate the example of capital heretofore set in numberless instances."[8]

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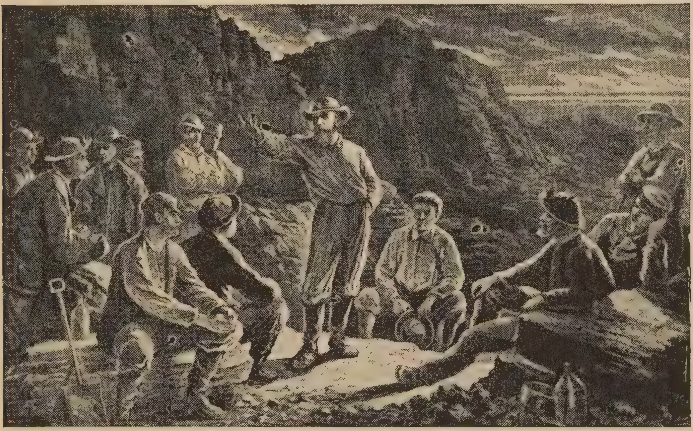
[7] G. E. McNeill, *Labor Movement, the Problem of Today* (1887), 154.

New members took an oath not to reveal the name or object of the order, the name of any member or the activities of the organization. To the outside world the name was designated by five stars and it became known to outsiders as the "society of the five stars." This secrecy aroused the fear and opposition of outsiders and gave opponents of organized labor a weapon with which to attack them.



Culver Service

Secrecy in the labor movement was particularly in bad repute in the 1870's because of the activity of the Molly Maguires, a secret organization of Irish miners in the anthracite coal regions, which fought oppressive tactics of employers by intimidation and murder. The Molly Maguires, shown here meeting in secret to call a strike in the coal mines, were destroyed in 1876 but their reign of terror was not soon forgotten and it was easy to confuse them with the Knights of Labor.

Since outsiders had not seen the ritual nor knew of the inner workings of the Knights, it was also easy to accuse them of socialism or communism and thus create distrust. The chief opponent of this secrecy was the Roman Catholic Church with its opposition to all secret societies. Since the majority of the Knights in many districts were members of that church, the Catholic point of view had to be given serious consideration. This and general public hostility finally led the Knights in 1881 to reveal the name and the objectives of the organization, but at the same time they forbade members to reveal any of the secret work of the assembly meetings.

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[8] F. Flügel and H. U. Faulkner, *Readings in the Economic and Social History of the United States,* 798.

Ritual

Undoubtedly many were drawn to the Knights of Labor by the religious tone and high idealism expressed in its ritual. Taking their motto from the Greek, Solon, they affirmed "That is the most perfect government in which an injury to one is the concern of all." The set of instructions given to every initiate into the order read:

> "Labor is noble and holy. To defend it from degradation; to divest it of the evils to body, mind, and estate which ignorance and greed have imposed; to rescue the toiler from the grip of the selfish—is a work worthy of the noblest and best of our race. . . . We mean no conflict with legitimate enterprise, no antagonism to necessary capital, but men, in their haste and greed, blinded by self interests, overlook the interests of others, and sometimes violate the rights of those they deem helpless. We mean to uphold the dignity of labor, to affirm the nobility of all who earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. We mean to create a healthy public opinion on the subject of labor (the only creator of values) and the justice of its receiving a full, just share of the values or capital it has created. We shall, with all our strength, support laws made to harmonize the interests of labor and capital, and also those laws which tend to lighten the exhaustiveness of toil."[9]

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[9] F. Flügel and H. U. Faulkner, *Readings*, p. 798.

Program

As far as the Knights had any official program, it was contained in the constitution adopted in 1878. Here they put themselves on record as favoring coöperatives, public lands for the actual settlers, a national currency issued directly to the people, the 8-hour day, the abolition of child labor, equal pay for both sexes for equal work, a law giving mechanics and laborers a first lien on their work for full wages, and other reforms. At one time or another its assemblies endorsed many types of reform including inheritance and income taxes, postal savings banks, workmen's compensation for injuries, public ownership of railways and other utilities.

These objectives, according to the constitution, were to be obtained by "agitation, education and organization" and not by the strike. "While acknowledging that it is sometimes necessary to enjoin an oppressor, yet strikes should be avoided whenever possible. Strikes, at best," they insisted, "only afford temporary relief; and members should be educated to depend upon thorough organization, coöperation and political action." "We must teach our members," declared Grand Master Powderly before the Pittsburgh convention of 1880, "that the remedy for the redress of wrongs we complain of does not lie in the suicidal strike; but it lies in thorough effective organization. Without organization we cannot accomplish anything; through it we hope to forever banish that curse of modern civilization—wage slavery." Although various assemblies of the Knights carried on strikes, the national officers never themselves called one and supported very few.

ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR

The growth of the Knights during the first ten years was extremely slow; their number at the end of 1879 was probably not more than 10,000. The membership of Assembly No. 1 was at first limited to tailors. Later associate members or "sojourners" from other crafts were admitted so that they might learn the ritual and in turn form assemblies of their own craft. As the number of assemblies grew it became necessary to unite them into District Assemblies. By 1878 the Knights had grown sufficiently to call a General Assembly which became the governing body with national officers, and which met annually. Stephens was elected the First Grand Master Workman. He resigned shortly after and was succeeded by Terence V. Powderly.

The great contribution of Stephens and of the Knights of Labor in their early years was the stress laid upon the *solidarity* of labor. There was a place in the Knights for virtually all workers—skilled and unskilled, men and women, black and white. The only important restriction was that "No person who either sells or makes a living, or any part of it, by the sale of intoxicating drink, either as a manufacturer, dealer or agent, or through any member of the family, can be admitted to membership in this order, and no lawyer, banker, professional gambler or stock broker can be admitted."

This obviously opened membership to all types including many middle class professional people who were not strictly wage earners. At the same time it gave access to the order to innumerable reformers with pet schemes for salvation which tended to confuse the policy of the Knights and to spread their efforts over too wide an area. To combat this, a later regulation required that three-fourths of the membership of the new locals must be of the wage-earning class. In many cases the activities of the Knights were further confused by the existence of "mixed assemblies," that is, of locals composed of various crafts or types of work. This developed from the admission of "sojourners" and from the fact that in some localities there were not enough men to form a craft assembly. The uniting of different types in one assembly should and often did develop the ideal of unity, but in many cases it developed friction and weakened the efforts of the organization.

The great period of expansion came between 1879 and 1886 when the official membership increased from less than 10,000 to over 700,000. There were many claims that it reached 1,000,000 and this may have been so, for locals appeared and disintegrated with great rapidity. The Knights began in Philadelphia, then spread to the mining district around Pittsburgh and then to other parts of the country. Branches were even set up in France, Italy, Belgium, England, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia.

Causes of Growth

The causes for this rapid growth of the Knights lie deeper than the policy of secrecy and the idealism of its ritual. Essentially they rest upon the condition of labor at the end of the 1870's. The panic of 1873 had started the longest depression in the nation's history. Wages were slashed and unemployment was widespread. Strikes were frequent and generally unsuccessful. Many unions were destroyed; others weakened or disorganized. These years of labor discontent came to a climax in the great railroad strike of 1887 which tied up 700 miles of railroad, involved 100,000 strikers, and ended in riots and the destruction of millions of dollars worth of property in the Pittsburgh region. It was an uprising against years of wage reductions, discouragement, and unemployment.

With many of the older unions destroyed and with labor organizations harassed by blacklists, private police, and Pinkerton detectives, it was natural for labor to turn both to politics and to a new labor organization. Many labor leaders ran for office on the Greenback Labor party ticket of 1878 and workers helped to pile up the million votes polled by that party. At the same time, workers turned by the hundred thousands to the Knights of Labor. The old unions were badly smashed; strikes and rioting had failed. Here was an organization that stressed labor unity and solidarity, that gave the protection of secrecy, and that welcomed all workers. Possibly it would provide a way out.

Not only did the Knights appear to offer a way out, but they were actually winning victories in many places. The leaders might oppose strikes on general principle, but local assemblies were constantly calling them. In the end the national organization had to provide for the raising of defense funds and give aid in certain strikes, although the total of such financial aid never amounted to much. Spectacular success was won by the glass workers in 1884 and by the railroad men on the Union Pacific in the same year. An even more successful victory was won in 1885 against the Gould railroads—the Wabash and the Kansas, Missouri and Pacific. The ease with which railroad victories were won, particularly those on the Gould system against the greatest railroad capitalist of the day, gave the Knights tremendous prestige, and thousands of new members flocked to join their ranks.

The Knights were also unusually successful in the use of the boycott. In many cases this weapon ended the use of the "iron-clad oath" and restored wage reductions. According to Ware, the Knights of Labor "was the most successful boycotting organization in the history of American labor."[10] Successful strikes and boycotts threw the power in the Knights temporarily to the hands of the more active members and gave to the order in the middle 'eighties an extremely aggressive temper.

DECLINE OF THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR

The decline of the Knights of Labor was even more rapid than its growth. In the four years from 1886 to 1890 its membership dropped from over 700,000 to about 100,000. The last official figure given out was 74,635 in 1893. After that the organization ceased to have any importance, although it continued to exist until 1917. The change was so sudden that a labor leader as early as July, 1886, wrote: "It seemed last March or April as though the Golden Age were at hand, now it seems as though they had been deceived by a will-o'-the-wisp."

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[10] Ware, *op. cit.*, 334.

Many reasons are given for this sudden decline. In the first place, unsuccessful strikes undermined the prestige of the Order. The victories of 1884 and 1885 were not duplicated in 1886. A disastrous defeat on the southwestern railroads in the latter years lost the Knights their membership among the workers of the western railroads. Their failure to back a general 8-hour strike in Chicago in the same year broke their power in this great industrial center. At the same time, an episode of this strike did much to alienate public sympathy, not only from the Knights but from the labor movement generally.

The Haymarket Riot

On May 3 the locked-out employees of the McCormick reaper concern held a mass meeting near the factory. As the strikebreakers emerged at the end of the day's work, a pitched battle ensued. Soon the police arrived on the scene, opened fire and killed four of the strikers, wounding many more. A protest meeting held the next evening ended without incident and the crowd was dispersing when a cordon of police descended upon them. Someone threw a bomb at the police and they retaliated by firing into the crowd. No evidence pointed to the Knights or any other labor organization as being responsible, but in the hysteria of condemnation which followed the Knights were bitterly criticized.[11] The Haymarket riot strengthened the opposition of employers, the churches, and the courts, and put labor on the defensive for many years.

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[11] The Chicago law officers placed the bomb throwing on the anarchists and rounded up eight of them. The judge ruled that it was not necessary

Varied Membership

Undoubtedly the extremely mixed character of the membership of the Knights weakened the Order. Until the early 'eighties it was largely composed of wage-earners' organizations. As it spread into the West its membership was diluted with farmers, small shopkeepers, and others who had little interest in the immediate problems of the wage earner. This brought friction and confusion and prevented united action at a time when the Order was growing rapidly and becoming too unwieldy to direct efficiently. By 1893 the craft organizations had largely left it and the Knights were taken over by socialist reformers and farmers' groups.

Terence V. Powderly

Much stress has also been laid on the inadequate leadership as a cause of decline. From 1879 to 1893 Terence V. Powderly was the Grand Master and Powderly's own confusion and uncertainty as to methods was reflected in the policies of the Order. In personal appearance Powderly was far from the public's idea of a typical labor leader. As described by a fellow leader,

> Powderly was a slender man, under average height with mild blue eyes behind glasses. Blond mustache hides his mouth and bends down to below his chin. Light brown hair in curves that are neither waves nor curls rests on his coat collar, heavy

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to prove presence on the spot, that it was enough to prove that they had encouraged the use of violence. The identity of the criminal was never discovered. Nevertheless, all eight were found guilty; seven were condemned to death and one to imprisonment. Four were hanged, one committed suicide, and the penalty of two was commuted to life imprisonment. In 1893 Governor John P. Altgeld pardoned the three who survived. No proof was ever found to show that any one of the eight threw the bomb. The full story can be found in Henry David, *A History of the Haymarket Affair* (1936) and a shorter account in Louis Adamic, *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America* (1931).

behind but almost burned away at the top. Wears at convention double-breasted, black, broadcloth coat, stand-up collar, plain tie, dark trousers and narrow small shoes. He looks and behaves like a man of good breeding, accustomed to the usages of society, but is unlike the average labor reformer in appearance. All around him are strapping big fellows with hands and shoulders formidable to the eye, unpolished gems in the main. English novelists take men of Powderly's look for their poets, gondola scullers, philosophers and heroes crossed in love but no one ever drew such a looking man as the leader of a million of the horny-fisted sons of toil.[12]

Powderly was a sincere believer in human betterment and an earnest worker to raise the standard of life for the common man. He was also a strong believer in the 8-hour day, in coöperatives, and in many other things for which the Knights officially stood. But Powderly was a man of peace who disliked strikes and believed in progress through education rather than force and through evolution rather than revolution. He was essentially an idealist and reformer. Moreover, his health was delicate and he was continuously overworked.[13] These factors all help to explain his waverings and change of policy when confronted by important decisions. He had little executive ability and the problem of handling an organization of 700,000 during a period of strain and stress was beyond him. His long leadership was due to the fact that he was an orator and writer of great ability and a powerful propagandist.

Powderly can be understood only in relation to his time. America of the 1880's was in a period of agitation and change. Americans were debating the problems of public lands, control of public utilities, banking, currency, and the tariff and attempting to solve them. The economic structure of the nation was changing and there was no clear-cut formula as to the place and policy of labor in this changing world. In such a period of change and confusion Powderly gave to labor the leadership typical of an idealist and reformer. In this sense he was a man of his age.[14]

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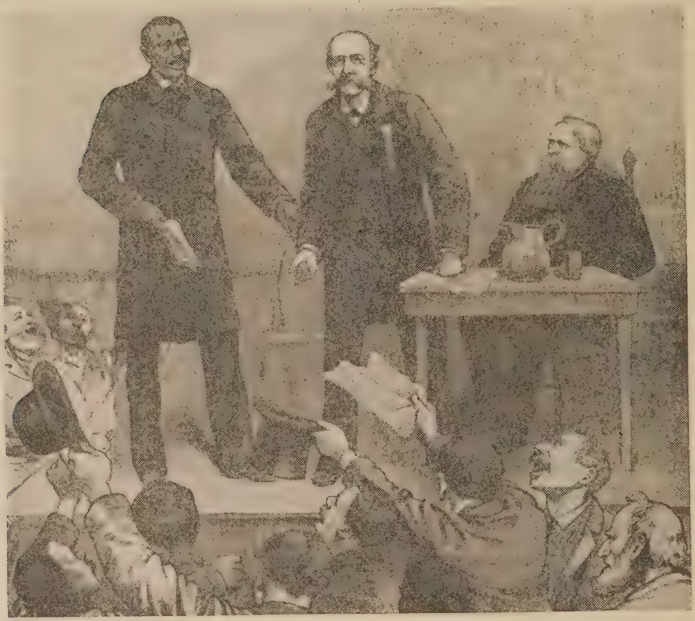
[12] Ware, *op. cit.*, 83.

[13] He was Mayor of Scranton, Pennsylvania, 1878–1884, and never gave full time to the Knights until after 1886.



Culver Service

Powderly's leadership may indeed have been one of the causes for the decline of the Knights. However, at the time of this convention in 1886, both Powderly and the Knights were at the height of their power. Here Frank J. Farrell, Negro delegate to the 10th Annual Convention of Knights of Labor, introduces Powderly to the enthusiastic Knights.

Competition of the American Federation of Labor

Another cause of the disappearance of the Knights of Labor was the rise of a rival organization, the American

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[14] Powderly is critically handled in N. J. Ware, *The Labor Movement in the United States 1865–1890*, and more generously treated in H. J. Carman "Terence Vincent Powderly—An Appraisal," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. I, No. 1 (May, 1941), 83–87. Powderly's autobiography, *The Path I Trod* (1940), has been published under the editorship of H. J. Carman, Henry David and P. H. Guthrie.

Federation of Labor, based on the policy of federating national craft unions. This may have had little influence in the rapid decline during the period 1886 to 1890, for the A. F. of L. was not a going concern until 1886 and was small and weak for some years after. But it offered opposition to the Knights and provided another organization with which craft unions might affiliate. A number of national craft unions had joined the Knights of Labor as "trade districts," but their particular interests often came in conflict with the general policies of the Order. In the end they withdrew to find more congenial opportunities in the new federation. The story of the rise of the American Federation of Labor to power and influence will be told in the next chapter.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR

After 1893 the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor ceased to function as an important labor organization. Its place in the history of American labor, however, is significant. In the disastrous days after the panic of 1873 it helped to reorganize or revive old local unions that had been abandoned by their own national trade unions. It also helped to reorganize old national unions too weak to do the work alone. It helped tremendously to keep alive the labor movement and to provide wage earners with an opportunity to work for better conditions. In brief, it bridged the gap between the active period of organization in the 'sixties and the federation of unions under the A. F. of L. in the 'nineties.

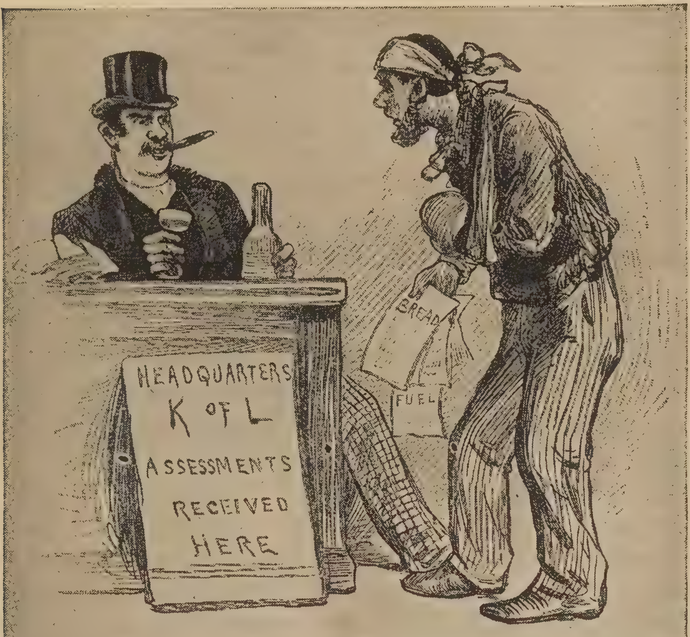
The sum total of gains made through the Knights of Labor in different unions or localities is difficult to measure, but it is large. The influence and prestige of the Knights brought, perhaps for the first time, a realization on a national scale of the significance of the labor problem. In 1883 a standing committee of labor was established in the House of Representatives and in the following year a Bureau of Labor was founded to gather expert information. A Senate Committee in 1883 for the first time made an intensive investigation of the relations between capital and labor. President Cleveland sent to Congress in 1886 the first presidential message devoted to labor in which he advocated the creation of a board of labor commissioners to act as official arbitrators in labor disputes. In 1888 Congress half-heartedly followed his suggestion by enacting a law for the settlement of railway disputes by arbitration, provided both parties were willing. For the moment these government actions resulted in little, but they marked a beginning of interest by the federal government in labor problems that was to grow with the years.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Knights was their reëmphasis of the dignity of labor and the need of solidarity. They preached the need of organization of all —skilled and unskilled, men and women, black and white— and they practiced what they preached.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Write out good, descriptive definitions of: yellow dog contracts; blacklists; contract labor; boycott; "old-line unionism"; lock-out.
2. Draw one or more cartoons involving the Knights of Labor: their secrecy, their type of organization, their rapid spread, the leaders, or the rapid decline. Remember that a good cartoon emphasizes a single idea.
3. Write two news accounts of the Haymarket Riot, one suitable for a paper hostile to labor and the other for a sympathetic newspaper.
4. Do some research on the panic of 1873; ascertain its causes and prepare yourself to describe in some detail its effects on the people of America then.
5. Investigate the Sacco-Vanzetti case in Massachusetts, that of Billings and Mooney in California, and see what similarities can be shown to the Haymarket Riot cases.

6. Governor John P. Altgeld of Illinois stands out as one of the few men in public life of his period who was open-minded toward labor. Look up his career and prepare a short biography of him.



TURN ABOUT IS FAIR PLAY.

Unsuccessful Striker (to Boss Knight) —"*You ordered the strike without cause. Now, suppose you pay the debts it has brought upon me.*"

7. Above is a cartoon hostile to the Knights of Labor. Write a brief paragraph telling what the cartoonist would want you to believe about the Knights of Labor. (*Culver Service*)

CHAPTER VI

The American Federation of Labor

EARLY YEARS OF THE FEDERATION

WHILE THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR WERE DECLINING RAPIDLY, another national organization, the American Federation of Labor, was slowly and painfully laying the foundations of what was eventually to become the outstanding labor organization of the country. Two fundamental causes explain the rise of the A. F. of L. The first was the obvious need for some national federation which would unite the efforts of the various unions belonging to it. Labor needed a national organization which could determine general policies and it needed national officers who could speak for it as a whole, represent it nationally and straighten out differences between the various unions. As the Knights of Labor declined, the A. F. of L. took over this national position and assumed these functions.

The second cause for the rise of the A. F. of L. was that it provided a national organization which met the needs of the skilled workers during the years after 1885. The Knights of Labor, as we have pointed out, held the theory that the interests of all workers, including the small businessman and the farmers, were much the same and that all should join together to fight wealth and monopoly. In a sense this might be true. Actually the immediate problems of the wage earner were different from those of the businessman or the farmer and the interests of the skilled worker might be different from those of the unskilled. As a matter of fact, there were few industries in the 1880's that were as yet using large numbers of unskilled laborers. Unlike conditions a half century later, manufacturing in the 'eighties was largely based on the work of skilled craftsmen. The day of "mass industries" based on unskilled workers was still in the future. For the time being, labor unions were bound to be composed mainly of skilled craftsmen.

Skilled workers might talk of the "solidarity of all labor interests" and the need of maintaining harmonious relations with all workers, but they were mainly concerned with their own particular problems. They knew that the primary objectives of all labor were shorter hours, better working conditions, and higher pay. They also knew that the methods of obtaining these objectives—organization, collective bargaining, the strike, and so forth—were the same. The task, nevertheless, of improving conditions in their own craft seemed so great and so complicated that they had little time to spend on the problems of the unskilled or even of other skilled workers.

At the call of a few labor leaders a conference met in 1881 at Terre Haute, Indiana, and a second in the same year at Pittsburgh. At Pittsburgh representatives from six national unions and from local and district assemblies of the Knights of Labor founded the "Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada." Their resolutions dealt with problems close to the interests of skilled workers—child labor laws, apprentice laws, abolition of prison and foreign contract labor, exclusion of Chinese immigration. Their constitution was modeled closely on that of the British Trade Union Congress.

Although the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions met annually until 1886, it never amounted to much. The center of the stage was occupied by the Knights of Labor. Nevertheless, the friction between the craft unions and the Knights was increasing, particularly when the Knights failed to endorse the 8-hour movement so close to the hearts of craft unionists. This friction reached a climax in 1886 when the Knights, proud of their strength and influence, ignored the crafts at their annual convention, and refused to accept a working agreement with them. In that year a trade union committee issued a call for a convention at Columbus, Ohio, for the purpose of drawing "the bonds of unity much closer between all the trade unions of America." There the delegates founded the American Federation of Labor. In the meantime, Samuel Gompers, president of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, called upon his organization to meet in convention at Columbus and there they amalgamated with the American Federation of Labor. Gompers was elected president of the new organization and his office made a full-time job. From then until his death Gompers gave his entire time to organized labor.

The backbone of the A. F. of L. in its early years was the carpenters, cigar makers, printers, iron and steelmakers, and iron molders. For their time these unions were relatively strong and their leadership was excellent. Nevertheless, the growth of the Federation was slow. It started in 1886 with a membership of about 138,000. It took 12 years to double that number to 278,000 in 1898. These were years of storm and stress. At the beginning there was the rivalry with the Knights of Labor and unsuccessful efforts to reconcile their differences and establish some kind of working agreement. There was a long battle with the Socialist Labor party, which attempted to capture the Federation and turn its activities into political channels. A less extreme group of Socialists also believed that the Federation should actively participate in political action, a group strong enough to oust Gompers from the presidency during 1894. The Federation had to meet the panic of 1893 which halted the wheels of American industry and brought widespread unemployment to union members. The disastrous effects of the panic of 1893 not only strengthened the position of those within the union who would emphasize political action, but it led to the great political uprising of 1896. In such a situation, labor leaders, who feared that the Federation might be submerged in politics, found it difficult to steer a wise course.

The Homestead Strike

Finally, the growth of the Federation was weakened by two disastrous strikes. In June, 1892, the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, one of the stronger unions in the A. F. of L., called a strike in the Carnegie steel mills at Homestead, Pennsylvania, in protest against a reduction in wages. Efforts on the part of the Carnegie Company to open the mills by importing several hundred Pinkerton detectives to guard them led to a pitched battle and the ousting of the Pinkertons. The company then called for state help and 8,000 National Guardsmen were dispatched to Homestead. The strike finally collapsed in November and with it the power of the Amalgamated in most of the steel industry.

The Pullman Strike

Two years later the disastrous effects of the panic came to a climax in the famous Pullman strike. The workers in the Pullman Parlor Car Company at Pullman, Illinois, struck in May, 1894, against a reduction in wages, and many of them joined the American Railway Union. This union, organized by Eugene V. Debs and composed of railroad workers, called a sympathetic strike and ordered its members not to handle Pullman cars. The strike, centering around Chicago, quickly spread throughout the Northwest and disorganized normal traffic in that area. On the grounds that the strikers were interfering with the transportation of mail and violating the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, the federal government stepped in. President Cleveland sent troops to Chicago over the protest of Governor Altgeld of Illinois. The Attorney General then asked for an injunction (court order) ordering officials of the union to desist from interfering with the mails, injuring property or influencing in any way the workers from performing "any of their duties as employees." On the refusal of Debs and other leaders to obey this injunction, they were cited for contempt of court and sent to jail.

In the meantime the trade unions at Chicago telegraphed to Gompers insisting that he come to Chicago and call a general strike. Gompers not only opposed such a move but urged all workers connected with the A. F. of L. who were out on sympathetic strike to return to work. He was sure that a general sympathetic strike would be useless and he believed the unions ought not to put themselves in the position of open hostility to the federal authority. Gompers' stand ended the possibility of a general strike. Whether he did the right thing or not, his action brought down upon him and the A. F. of L. the bitter criticism of many labor unionists and others who were sympathetic to the strikers.[1] Many felt that he had betrayed the workers and that the A. F. of L. was too conservative to represent the real interests of the workers.

Eugene V. Debs

Debs, the leader of the Pullman strike, spent six months in jail and came out a confirmed socialist. He remained an advocate, defender, and leader of labor until his death in 1926, but from the time of the Pullman strike his chief interest was the promotion of the Socialist party. As the orator and standard-bearer of that party, he toured the country for a quarter of a century preaching the doctrine of a new order of society. Utterly sincere and with a personality that won the affection of friend and foe alike, Debs was recognized by the nation as the most passionate advocate of the rights of labor and millions of workers came to know the tall, lean figure as he appeared in all parts of the country to plead their cause. Unlike Gompers, Debs was interested in direct political action and organization by industries. Twice he took part in organizing rival unions to the A. F. of L., the American Railway Union in 1893 and the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905. Gompers and many of the A. F. of L. leaders considered him a menace to the labor movement, but his life was devoted to the interests of labor as well as the promotion of socialism.

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[1] A fuller story of the Pullman strike may be found in Louis Adamic, *Dynamite* (1931); E. Berman, *Labor Disputes and the Presidents of the United States* (1924); Herbert Harris, *American Labor* (1939); Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles* (1936); and Almont Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike* (1942). A Strike Commission, appointed by President Cleveland, and headed by Carrol D. Wright, held testimony and made a report in 1895. President Cleveland gave his side of the story in *Presidential Problems* (1904).

Factors in Early Growth

Despite serious difficulties and hardships the Federation experienced some growth and certain of the unions, such as the carpenters and printers, made definite progress toward the 8-hour day and better conditions of work. It is also clear that the lot of the wage earner as a whole was improving. From the end of the War between the States to the end of the century prices tended to go down while wages remained relatively stable, with the result that real wages increased. Furthermore, there was evidence that federal and state governments were beginning to take notice of labor demands. President Cleveland created a Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1887; an 8-hour day was extended to letter carriers in 1888, and to those employed in government contracts in 1892. In 1885 an Alien Contract Labor Law ended the legal practice of importing aliens under contract to labor and in 1893 the system of hiring out convict labor in federal prisons was abolished. The same tendency toward social legislation was also seen in the states. By 1896, 32 states had set up bureaus of labor statistics and at least a dozen had established the 8-hour day for state workers or employers on public contracts. A beginning of factory legislation is also seen in laws providing safeguards against hazardous machinery, prohibiting night work for women, limiting the working hours for women, and regulating tenement-house industries.

ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

Since it was founded in 1886 the form and organization of the A. F. of L. has changed but little. Unlike the Knights of Labor, where the structure and organization was highly centralized, the A. F. of L. is merely a federation of a hundred or more national or international unions, each one of which has its own constitution and its own officers, determines largely its own policies, makes its own rules, and charters its own locals. At no time in its history has the A. F. of L. been composed entirely of craft unions. Some of them, such as the United Mine Workers, were industrial unions; that is, all workers in one industry, no matter what their particular craft might be, were members of the same union.[2] Whatever its composition may be, the national union is largely supreme within its own field. Its national officers may approve or disapprove actions taken by a local union and usually have power to charter or expel such a union.

National Organization

In certain respects the American Federation of Labor resembles our federal government under the Articles of Confederation. The national unions, like the states, banded together for greater protection and strength but maintained their own autonomy or power of self-government. Once a year delegates meet in general convention to discuss policies, endorse programs, and elect national officers. The executive committee, which handles the affairs of the Federation between conventions, has important duties and grave responsibilities. It issues statements of policy and maintains a lobby in Washington to urge upon Congress the interests of labor. It issues charters to federal and national unions, promotes organizational work, and has the job of ironing out disputes between the various unions belonging to the A. F. of L.

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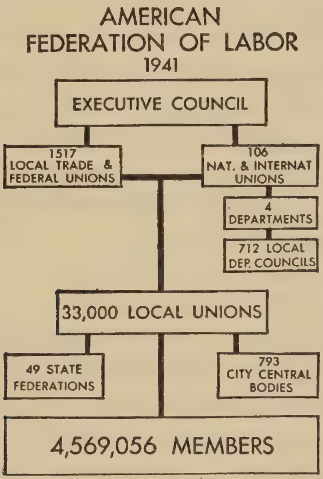
[2] The difference between craft and industrial unions is explained more fully in footnote, p. 150 and on pp. 223–224.


AMERICAN
FEDERATION OF LABOR
1941
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
1517 LOCAL TRADE & FEDERAL UNIONS
106 NAT. & INTERNAT UNIONS
4 DEPARTMENTS
712 LOCAL DEP. COUNCILS
33,000 LOCAL UNIONS
49 STATE FEDERATIONS
793 CITY CENTRAL BODIES
4,569,056 MEMBERS

The American Federation of Labor is not only a federation of national or international unions, it is also a federation of local or "federal unions." A glance at the accompanying chart will help to make this clear. When A. F. of L. organizers go into a locality or a certain plant and organize a group of workers who do not fit easily into a union already existing, the executive councils grant them a charter as a "federal union." They are directly affiliated with the A. F. of L. until such time as they can be absorbed into some national union. In 1941 there were over 1500 such unions.

City Central Unions and State Federations

The A. F. of L. urges its unions to work together for their mutual well-being in the larger localities by sending delegates to city central bodies usually called "central labor unions." It is the business of these central labor unions to coördinate the strength of labor in a given community the better to promote its interests. There were 793 of these city central bodies in 1941. Just as the central labor unions unify and promote the interests of labor in the cities, 49 state federations do the same job in each of the states and Puerto Rico. The state federations are supported by the national and federal unions and by the city central labor unions. Like the parent A. F. of L., they hold annual conventions, elect officers and maintain a paid secretary. The chief business of the secretary is to coördinate the power of labor, to promote favorable legislation, and to fight anti-labor moves in the state legislature.

Coördinating Departments

Despite the city central labor unions and the state federations, the A. F. of L. has been criticized because of lack of coördination. In the building industry, for example, there are 16 different unions which sometimes are in conflict over "jurisdictional" disputes. These disputes often concern the problem of which union should do a certain kind of work. To coördinate these interests and at the same time eliminate disputes between the unions, the A. F. of L. has brought together into departments the unions in the building trades, in the metal trades, and in the railroads. These three departments in turn maintain local department councils to unify their policies and interests in various localities.

The Union Label

There is a fourth department in the A. F. of L. quite different from the others—the Union Label Trades Department. It has a paid secretary-treasurer and its main business is propaganda. It urges the members of labor unions and the general public to purchase goods manufactured by union labor and so designated by a union label attached to it. The job of the Union Label Trades Department is by no means an easy one. Many unions, such as the hat makers', the boot and shoe workers', and the printers', have labels to show that the product is union made but it is often difficult to convince employers or manufacturers that it is to their interest to attach a union label. It sometimes adds expense to the finished product and may involve difficulties. Fully labeled stationery with a letterhead, for example, should contain the watermarked label of the paper makers' union and the label of the printers' union printing the letterhead. A fully labeled package of cigarettes would require at least two labels of the printers' and cigarette makers'. Even when labels are carried, union members or their wives do not always buy union-made goods. Early leaders spoke of the union label as "organized labor's most powerful weapon," but labor has failed to take advantage of the possibilities which it offered. Nevertheless, the union label is a distinctive feature of American unionism.

Illustration of Structure

Before leaving this description of the structure of the American Federation of Labor, let us try to make it even clearer by showing how an individual local union fits into it. Let us take, for example, a local carpenters' union and follow its affiliation looking at the chart on page 111. First of all the local belongs to its own national union and through it is affiliated with the A. F. of L. In addition to that, it belongs and sends delegates to its City Central Labor Union and to its state federation. It also, as you will see, belongs to the Local Department Council, in this case the Building Trades Council, which includes delegates from the painters, plumbers, bricklayers, hod carriers, electric workers, and other trades. The local Building Trades Council in turn belongs to the national Building Trades Department of the A. F. of L. It also, as part of the A. F. of L., helps to support the Union Label Trades Department. This structure was not suddenly worked out from a theorist's dream; it gradually evolved over a period of a half century to meet the actual needs and problems.

POLICIES OF THE A. F. OF L.

The type of organization adopted by the A. F. of L. was one which grew out of experience and seemed to meet the needs of skilled labor in America. The same was true of the policies which were adopted. Most of the leaders of the A. F. of L. were convinced by 1900 that labor had failed to make greater progress because it had followed too many by-paths that led nowhere. For decades labor had advocated producers' coöperatives, but they had generally failed. It had allied itself with the lower middle class in anti-monopoly, free silver, and other political campaigns with little result except to dissipate its energies. At times it had been closely affiliated with socialism, but it was convinced at the turn of the century that America was committed to the existing economic system. If labor was to win public opinion, it must avoid radical policies.

Basis for Old-Line Unionism

Labor, in fact, had become suspicious and critical of government and political parties. In difficult situations, such as the Homestead strike and the Pullman strike, the power of the government had been used against it. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act had been directed against labor as well as against industrial monopolies. Experience with social legislation had not been encouraging. The battle to obtain approval of the legislatures, the executives and courts in 48 states was long and hard. The difficulty of establishing a strong third party in American politics was well known.

Moreover, labor was suspicious of politicians, reformers, and "intellectuals" who had often used the power of labor for their own pet schemes. All this tended to throw labor back upon itself and its own resources. It strengthened the determination to fight its own battles by old-line trade union methods.

Platform of the A. F. of L.

Unlike some of the earlier unions the A. F. of L. sought to avoid radical economic theories and agitation for general reforms. No one ever expressed the philosophy of the A. F. of L. better than Adolph Strasser, President of the Cigar Makers' Union, in a statement before a Senate Committee in 1883. "We have no ultimate ends," said he. "We are going on from day to day. We are fighting only for immediate objects—objects that can be realized in a few years." If labor had no "ultimate aims," what did it want? When Samuel Gompers was asked this question many years later he answered, labor wants, "more, and more, here and now." Specifically, this "more" meant higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, more education, more comforts of life for workers and their families, and more of anything that might raise their standard of living and position in the community.

To obtain these objects, labor preferred peaceful means. It wanted recognition of the union, "collective bargaining" and then a "trade agreement" between workers and employers. John Mitchell asserted that "the hope of future peace in the industrial world lies in the trade agreement" and in this he echoed the belief of other labor leaders.[3] It was through the trade agreement that labor hoped to obtain the 8-hour day, higher wages, and other benefits. Although it hoped to obtain these objects peacefully, it did not hesitate to use the boycott, the strike or any other weapon in the arsenal of labor conflict.

[3] John Mitchell, *Organized Labor* (1903), 347.

The A. F. of L. and Politics

In any event, labor expected that the advance would be slow—a day-by-day affair. As long as they believed that progress would be mainly accomplished by negotiations and a "trade agreement," they expected to do it themselves. They asked no favors of the government, and they were violently opposed to compulsory arbitration. "Several times," said Gompers, "the plain question has been put to me by members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary: 'Mr. Gompers, what can we do to allay the causes of strikes that bring discomfort and financial suffering to all alike?' I have had to answer, 'Nothing'. . . . Foremost in my mind is to tell the politicians to keep their hands off and thus to preserve voluntary institutions and opportunity for individual and group initiative and leave the way open to deal with problems as the experience and facts of industry shall indicate . . . human justice comes through other agencies than the political. Economic justice will come through the organization of economic agencies. . . . "[4] This policy Gompers called "voluntarism" and he urged it as the proper course until the day of his death. If labor asked no favors, it also insisted that there should be no discrimination against them. The A. F. of L. demanded repeal of the conspiracy laws, and an amendment to the Sherman Anti-Trust Act exempting trade unions from its provisions.

Whatever may have been the theory, the A. F. of L. could not entirely avoid politics or political action. First of all, there were many socialists within the ranks of labor who believed in political action. In the second place, labor was forced to protect itself against anti-labor legislation. Moreover, it could hardly evade endorsing and working for legislation favorable to its own interests. During the great reform period from 1900 to 1915 it endorsed the direct election of United States Senators, the secret ballot, civil service reform, the initiative and referendum and other measures to democratize the government. It advocated legislation to protect working women and children, supported the demand for workmen's compensation, and urged Congress to legislate an 8-hour day for government employees.

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[4] Samuel Gompers, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* (1925), II, 26.

Attitude toward a Labor Party

The A. F. of L. as an organization has always refused to organize a labor party after the manner of the British unions. It insists that it is non-political and non-partisan. This does not mean that it has no interest in politics. It has, in fact, a very definite interest—the election of candidates friendly to labor, and the defeat of those opposed to labor. Its policy is "to reward your friends and punish your enemies." This means that it continually endorses and works for particular candidates, no matter what their political label may be, but never endorses a party as such. The nearest it ever came to such action was in 1924 when it officially supported Robert La Follette, presidential candidate of the Progressive party. This was also the only time in its long history when it officially endorsed a candidate for the presidency.

The Injunction as a Political Issue

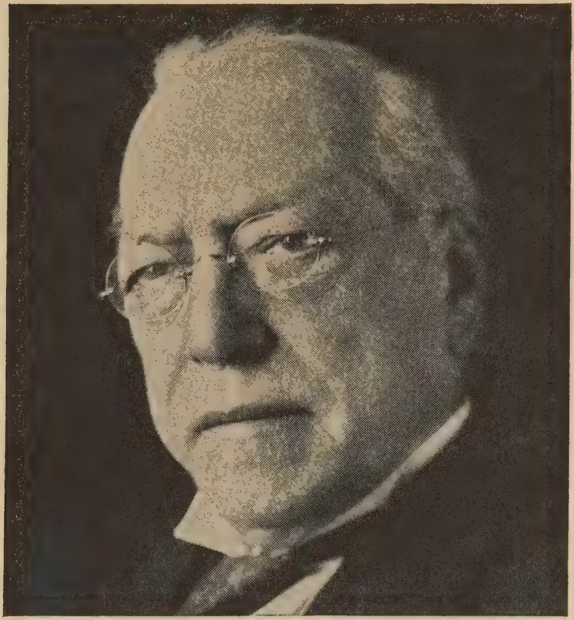
More than any other issue, it was the use of the injunction in labor disputes that brought the A. F. of L. into the political arena whether it liked it or not. Along with this was the use of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act against labor unions. This had begun in the Pullman strike of 1894 and the problem became acute in the succeeding years. The Federation moved its headquarters to Washington in 1896 and from then on took an active part in pressure politics. In the campaign of 1908 it demanded that both major parties introduce an anti-injunction plank in their platforms. The Republicans not only ignored the demand but nominated William Howard Taft, who as a federal judge had issued sweeping injunctions against labor. The "Republican reactionaries," said Gompers, "told Labor to go to Denver," where the Democrats were to meet. There the Democratic party put themselves on record as opposed to the use of injunctions in labor disputes, and after that Gompers and other leaders worked unofficially but openly for Bryan in 1908 and for Wilson in 1912. The Democrats returned the favor by attempting in the Clayton Anti-Trust Act of 1914 to exempt labor from prosecution under the anti-trust acts and to soften the use of the injunction. Although nonpartisan in theory, the A. F. of L. has tended since 1908 unofficially to support the Democratic party.

LABOR LEADERSHIP

Samuel Gompers

Few leaders have ever influenced an organization or a movement more than Samuel Gompers influenced the A. F. of L. and the labor movement in America. With the exception of one year (1894), he was its president from the founding in 1886 until his death in 1924. Like many another American leader, he came to this country as an immigrant boy; he was born in London in 1850 of Jewish parents who had migrated to England from Holland. His father was a cigar maker and Sam learned the trade. The family moved to America in 1863 and Gompers spent his young manhood on the New York east side where he manufactured cigars in the daytime and picked up what education he could in the evening at Cooper Union and elsewhere.

From the beginning Gompers threw himself heart and soul into trade union activities, and after 1886 he gave his full time to the labor movement. In appearance he was below average height, with short legs, a long body, and a large head on which he often wore a black skull cap. Notwithstanding his height, Samuel Gompers was a natural-born leader.



American Federation of Labor

Gompers was a forceful speaker who could sense the reactions of his audience and influence them with his oratory. His capacity for work was enormous and his fighting spirit could never be quenched. In fact, he never seemed utterly happy unless he was battling dissenting factions in the unions or enemies of labor.

Despite his life-long battle for labor Gompers was personally tolerant, good-natured, unselfish, and a lover of people. Many might disagree with his policies, but few who knew him failed to respect the ability and fighting spirit of this little man who never hesitated to jump into the first line of any battle which he believed labor must fight.[5]

For 40 years Gompers was the leading spirit in American labor and the story of his life is almost the history of the American labor movement during these years. More than any other person he determined the policies of the A. F. of L. Gompers was not an "intellectual" in the sense that he originated or developed many ideas. His theories were few, but he stuck to them consistently. They became the policy and the philosophy of the A. F. of L.—a loosely bound federation largely based on craft unionism seeking immediate gains. In his earlier years he had inclined toward socialism, but later, he threw this over for a more immediate program. He accepted the economic system, but devoted his efforts to improving the lot of labor in that system. The policies, which we have already described, were essentially his. They remained the working program of the A. F. of L. until his death and have changed little since that time.

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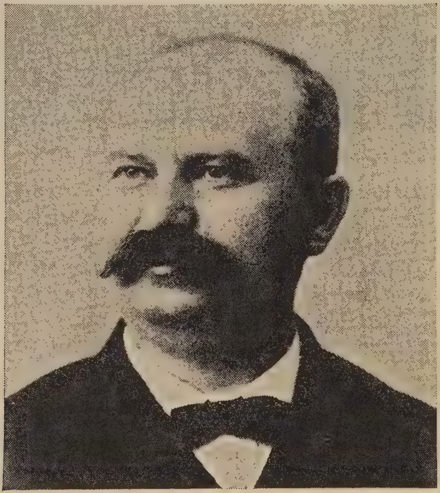
[5] Gompers has told this story in his autobiography, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* (2 vols., 1925).

Adolph Strasser



American Federation of Labor

Important as Gompers was in the development of the A. F. of L., many other labor leaders contributed to its growth and power. A loose federation of national unions such as the A. F. of L. needed many able leaders. Among them in the early years was Adolph Strasser of the Cigar Makers' Union. Strasser, elected president of the Cigar Makers in 1877, was an immigrant who had taken part in the German labor movement before coming to America. An ardent socialist in his early years, he had thrown this over for pure trade unionism on the British model. He developed the Cigar Makers into such a union, and it in turn became the model for the new national and international unions of the 1880's and 1890's. Gompers in his early years was a president of one of the locals of the Cigar Makers and for many years worked closely with Strasser, absorbing many of his ideas and policies.

John Mitchell

American Federation of Labor

One of the most brilliant leaders produced by labor during the later years was John Mitchell (1870–1919), president of the United Mine Workers. Starting to work in the mines of Illinois at the age of twelve, he joined the United Mine Workers at its organization in 1890 and at the age of twenty-nine was its president.

Although there were only 43,000 members when he rose to power, Mitchell directed their uphill fight so well that in 1908, when he resigned the presidency, the union boasted a membership of over 300,000. It was then the largest union in America. At the age of thirty-two Mitchell led the miners through the spectacular and successful coal strike of 1902 in such superb fashion that his fame became national and the confidence of labor in him absolute. He also won the sympathy of many outside the ranks of labor for the demands of the miners. His great strength was his intelligent, even scholarly, approach to a problem, and his unhurried and confident method of handling a situation. After he retired from the presidency of the mine workers because of ill health, he served for some time as commissioner of labor in New York State. Unlike Gompers, Mitchell believed in industrial unionism (his own union was an industrial union), independent political action by labor and closer cooperation with the government.

Gompers' Colleagues

Gompers and Strasser happened to be of the Jewish race, but the great leaders of the early period of the A. F. of L. were of many nationalities. James Duncan of the Granite Cutters was an immigrant from Scotland who helped found the A. F. of L. and was its first vice-president for 28 years. Two Americans of Irish descent played a leading role in the early years: P. J. McGuire, friend of Gompers and Strasser and president of the Carpenters' Union, and John McBride, the outstanding leader of the Miners in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties and president of the A. F. of L. in 1894. Another colorful figure with whom Gompers worked closely was Andrew Furuseth, a tall, gaunt Norseman, who was president of the Seamen's Union. With the help of Gompers and Senator La Follette, Furuseth finally won a life-long battle when the La Follette Seamen's Act of 1915 won better working conditions on the American merchant marine. Men like these established the American labor movement on a firm foundation.

Qualities of Leadership

Except for their greater fame and influence, the careers of Gompers and Mitchell were not unlike those of many other labor leaders. In a movement whose combined membership today represents over 13,000,000 there is a need of wise and skillful leadership. A good labor leader must have the ability to handle men singly and in large groups. He must be a ready speaker who can address, often on the spur of the moment, large meetings of union members or the general public. He must have the wisdom and courage to make decisions that often concern the welfare of hundreds of thousands of workers. Moreover, he must be able adequately to represent the point of view of labor to the public and before legislative committees. Above all, he must know the industry in which his members work as well as the management knows it. In this way alone can he adequately represent their interests during negotiations for higher wages or better conditions of work. These negotiations today often mean dealing with large corporations whose interests are national in their scope.

Men with such qualifications are rare in any walk of life. It is remarkable that labor has produced so many. It takes long training to develop such men and the typical labor leader usually serves a long period of apprenticeship at his trade or in small official jobs in his union before emerging at the top. When he once reaches the top, however, his career in high position is generally a long one, and this despite the fact that elections are usually on a yearly basis. There are two main reasons for this. In the first place, men who have left the shop for executive work are less and less fitted as time goes on to go back to the factory, and as leaders they are marked men who would find it difficult to get a job. Moreover, they have no desire to go back and do not hesitate, after the manner of politicians, to use the influence of their position to obtain reëlection each year. In the second place, their long training and experience is too valuable to be lightly discarded and delegates at the annual conventions are inclined to reëlect the same men over a long period of years.

THE FIRST GREAT ERA OF EXPANSION

With the turn of the century labor could look forward to better days. In the years from 1898 to 1904 the membership of the A. F. of L. increased almost a million and a half from 278,000 to 1,676,200. As the tide of prosperity swept over the nation after the Spanish-American War, labor saw its opportunity in the increased demand for workers and rose to meet the opportunity. As one labor historian describes it, these were the "heroic" days of unionism. It was a period when, "Drawn together by a sense of craft fellowship, the workers felt themselves comrades in a cause in which all things big and small—strikes, dues, picnics, committee meetings, organizing campaigns, and scraps with the 'bosses'—had importance."[6] It was a time of sacrifice, aggressive action, and rapid progress.

Not only did membership increase rapidly but a helping hand was extended from such middle-class organizations as the National Consumers League (founded 1898), the National Child Labor Committee (1904), and the American Association for Labor Legislation (1906), all committed to collective bargaining, and in the case of the last two, to far-reaching social legislation. "It was the harvest," said Gompers, "of the years of organizing work which were beginning to bear fruit."[7] Many employers had also come to the conclusion that the future rested in union organization and collective bargaining. One outcome of this theory was the organization in 1900 of the National Civic Federation with Marcus A. Hanna as president and Samuel Gompers as vice-president. Its purpose was to bring together employer, employee, and the general public to solve national industrial problems. So far had this improvement in understanding gone that one student described it as "a honeymoon period of capital and labor."[8]

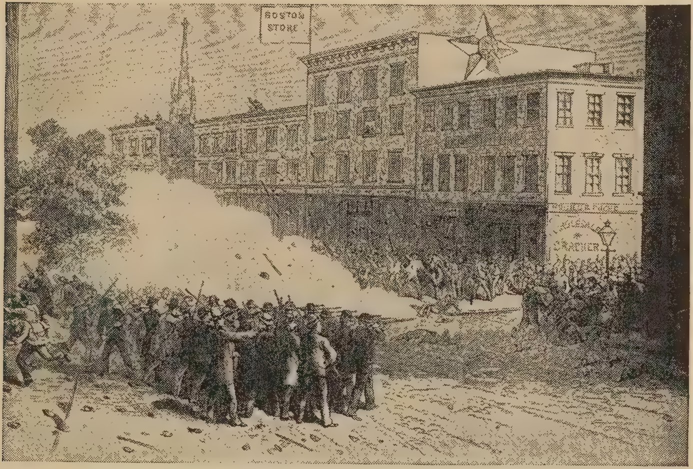
[6] Lewis Lorwin, *The American Federation of Labor* (1933), 58–59.

[7] Samuel Gompers, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor*, II, 105.

[8] Selig Perlman in Commons and others, *History of Labor in the United States*, II, 524.

Labor's Initial Gains

Wider and more sympathetic understanding of the aims of labor along with aggressive labor action brought numerous "trade agreements" and improvements in labor conditions. By 1900 the building trades, the granite cutters and the bituminous coal miners had won the 8-hour day. The printers after a ten-year battle obtained both an 8-hour day and a trade agreement. The idea of a joint-partnership between organized labor and organized capital was beginning to take hold.



Culver Service

The gains of labor were not made without bitter struggles. In the quarter century, 1881–1905, according to government figures, there were 36,757 strikes, of which over half had occurred in the last eight years, and there was no let-up in the succeeding period. Strikes like the one shown here between iron and coal company's police and a "miners' mob" in Scranton, Pennsylvania, marked this period.

The Coal Strike of 1902

Of these thousands of strikes, none was more important than that in 1902 of the recently organized United Mine Workers in the anthracite coal regions of Pennsylvania. On the one side were the miners demanding increase in wages and reduction of hours from 10 to 9, payment according to weight of coal mined, and recognition of the union. On the other were the coal operators, controlled by the eight railroads that tapped the anthracite region, which in turn were dominated by Morgan and the most powerful financiers of the day. Under the skillful leadership of John Mitchell these miners held their ranks firm from May to October while offering repeatedly to arbitrate their grievances. Partial victory came only after President Theodore Roosevelt had brought the pressure of the government to bear upon Wall Street and had threatened to take over the mines. Roosevelt had no intention of breaking the strike; his object was rather to force the owners to submit to arbitration. The operators capitulated and a commission studied the situation and made an award. It took two more strikes, however, in 1912 and 1916, before recognition of the Union and the 8-hour day were finally won. What made the coal strike of 1902 the "most important single event in the history of American trade unionism until that time," was "that for the first time a labor organization tied up for months a strategic industry and caused wide suffering and discomfort to the public without being condemned as a revolutionary menace to the existing social order calling for suppression by the government."[9] On the contrary, it won public sympathy as a legitimate struggle against a powerful and dangerous monopoly.

Labor's Success in the Clothing Industry

Even stronger proof of the rising strength of labor was given a few years after the coal strike in the women's clothing industry. After the invention of the sewing machine by Elias Howe and the discovery that clothes could be made in standard sizes, women's apparel factories appeared.

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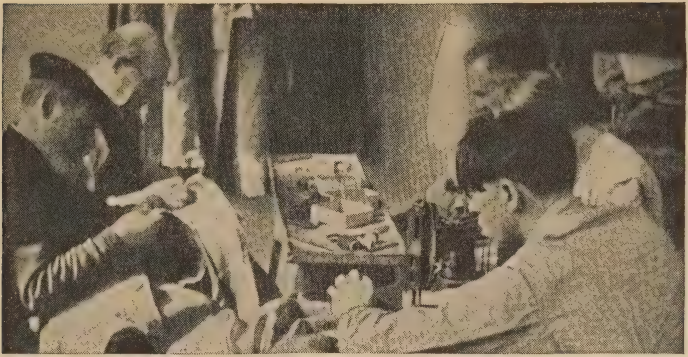
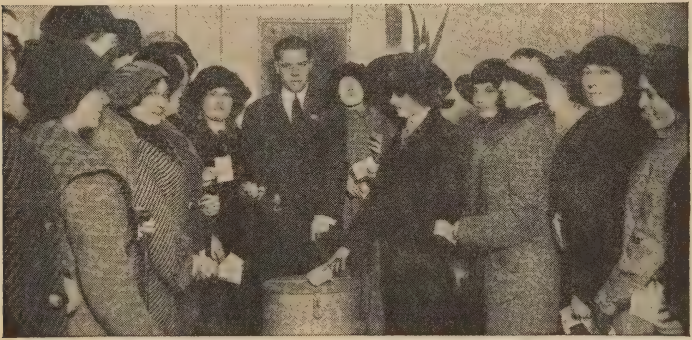
[9] Selig Perlman, *A History of Trade Unionism in the United States*, 177.



I. L. G. W. U.

Here the workers, chiefly immigrants and women, were largely unorganized and suffered from long hours, low wages, and unsanitary conditions of work, some of which are here shown—poor lighting, crowded workrooms, such low benches and machines that workers had to be constantly bent over. In small shops like this one the employees had few means by which they could oppose their employers in order to secure better wages and conditions of work.



I. L. G. W. U.

In the fall of 1909 the Ladies' Waist Makers' Union, Local 25 of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in New York, here shown voting for a strike, called a strike which developed into a general walkout. Twenty thousand women were soon on strike, and New York witnessed the sight of dozens of women picketers dragged daily to the police courts to be fined.

A widespread sympathy for the strikers in the Ladies' Waist Makers' Union finally forced the employers to give in. In a series of conferences where the strikers were represented by John Mitchell and Morris Hillquit, the workers won substantially all their demands but the closed shop. As Gompers pointed out, this "uprising of the twenty thousand" showed "the extent to which women are taking up industrial life, their consequent tendency to stand together in the struggle and the capacity of women as strikers to suffer, to do, and to dare in support of their rights."

The "uprising of the twenty thousand" was but a preliminary to a greater struggle a year later when the cloak and suit workers went on strike for higher wages and better conditions of work. The National I. L. G. W. U. took charge and their membership jumped in two weeks from 20,000 to 70,000. After a series of conferences the strikers won most of their demands. What was more important, machinery for arbitration of future disputes was established. Two short strikes changed the women's clothing industry from a chaotic and oppressively sweated trade to one strongly organized with effective methods of self control. As the years went on, the garment trades as represented by the I.L.G.W.U. and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers became models of effective bargaining machinery.

Opposition of the National Association of Manufacturers

Expansion and success inevitably developed opposition. The more conciliatory employers might join the National Civic Federation and agree to arbitration and trade agreements, but the more conservative stiffened their backs for the fight. The spearhead of the opposition to organized labor was the National Association of Manufacturers (founded 1895) and its subsidiary organizations. Although the N. A. M. claimed that it did not oppose organized labor as such, it maintained a persistent fight against all important methods used by unions in their struggle. One of its satellites was the Citizens' Industrial Association, composed mainly of small businessmen in various cities whose purpose it was to oppose organized labor.

Another subsidiary was the American Anti-Boycott Association (later called the League for Industrial Rights) founded in 1902 to oppose labor in the courts. This organization financed the legal battle for the employers in two famous boycott cases. In an effort to establish a closed shop, the Hatters' Union attempted a nation-wide boycott of the products of the D. C. Loewe and Company of Danbury, Connecticut. Attacked by the employers as a violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, the case dragged through the courts 14 years before the Supreme Court finally decided that an interstate boycott was illegal under the Sherman Act. The decision in the Danbury Hatters' case was a costly one for the unions. The Court awarded the company damages of $240,000.

The Buck Stove Case

More exasperating to organized labor was the court action resulting from a boycott supported by the A. F. of L. against the products of the Buck Stove and Range Company of St. Louis. In 1906 the metal polishers of this company struck for a 9-hour day and appealed to the Federation for help. The Federation, after investigation, added the name of the company to the "We Don't Patronize" list in the *American Federationist*, the monthly paper of the Federation. So effective was the boycott that the company requested and obtained from the federal court an injunction forbidding the officers and members of the Federation from including the company's name in their "unfair list" and also from referring to the disputes in print or by word of mouth. This unbelievable injunction was obeyed as far as the unfair list was concerned, but otherwise ignored, and Gompers, Mitchell, and Morrison (secretary of the Federation) were sentenced to prison for contempt of court. New complications developed, the sentences were not served, and eventually the case was dismissed by the Supreme Court as outlawed under the statute of limitations. Throughout both of the cases labor tried to test the fundamental issue of the use of the injunction in labor cases but without result.

Lean Years

This growing and well-organized opposition to unions had its effect, and organized labor entered again on a period of lean years. Its membership in 1910 was less than in 1904. Not only had it lost membership but through the propaganda of its opponents it had lost much public sympathy. In certain respects its position before the law had been whittled away by the courts. Said the president of the National Association of Manufacturers in 1906, with some exaggeration, "Only a few years ago trades unionism unrestrained and militant was rapidly forcing the industries of the country to a closed shop basis. It was almost a crime to criticize the unions. . . . But a change has come and the Association is largely responsible for it. . . . What has brought these changes? The question can be answered in one word—Organization."

Despite the opposition of the N. A. M. and the difficulties from internal dissensions,[10] the A. F. of L. held on. Membership began again to increase in 1911 and by the opening of the First World War in 1914 had grown to over 2,000,000. Unlike its experiences in earlier depressions, labor had survived the panic of 1907 without loss of membership. Moreover, the relative numerical position of organized labor had improved. Experts in labor statistics have estimated that in 1900 about 3.5 per cent of "organizable" wage earners belonged to unions; in 1910 the percentage had grown to at least 9.4.[11] The percentage of Union members to the whole labor population, however, was still very small.

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[10] Discussed in the next chapter.

[11] These percentages are taken from George E. Barnett, "The Growth of Labor Organizations in the United States, 1897–1914," *Quarterly*

Although the membership of unions and the amount of money wages increased greatly between 1898 and 1914, *real wages* had not followed the same trend. Most economists in 1914 were agreed that real wages had shown little if any improvement since 1900. As one student put it, "the American worker found himself at the outbreak of the World War handicapped by a slight but unmistakeable decline in the purchasing power of his wages. They sufficed to buy somewhat less than had the wages of the year 1900."[12] Economists were also agreed that during these years relatively few workers earned wages sufficiently high to maintain a decent standard of living.[13]

Social Legislation

Although real wages had not risen since the turn of the century, there was no doubt that the standard of living had improved. Many new inventions, such as the electric light, had helped to make life easier. A new interest in human welfare swept the country in the early years of the century which resulted in much social legislation. Legislation for the protection of children was passed in all of the states. An impetus for the protection of working women was given when the Supreme Court (1908) held an Oregon 10-hour law constitutional and many states prohibited or limited night work and passed other laws safeguarding them from work which would endanger health. Massachusetts passed the first minimum wage law in 1912 to be followed the next year by eight other states. Even men, particularly in dangerous trades, were aided by special legislation.

Journal of Economics, August, 1916, and Leo Wolman, *The Growth of American Trade Unions, 1880–1923* (1924).

[12] E. B. Woods, "Have Wages Kept Pace with the Cost of Living?", American Academy of Political and Social Science, *Annals*, LXXXIX, 135–147.

[13] This is discussed in H. U. Faulkner, *The Quest for Social Justice*, pp. 21 ff.

During these years of social legislation the most outstanding example of benefit to labor was the widespread adoption of workmen's compensation laws. These laws provided for compensation for injury or death incurred while working. The theory behind them was that industry rather than the worker should bear the cost of industrial accidents. Inadequate in these early years and poorly administered, workmen's compensation marked an important advance in according justice to the workers.

This development of social legislation, pushed by humanitarians of all classes and supported by organized labor, was felt even by the federal government. In 1915 Congress passed the La Follette Seamen's Act which went far to insure decent conditions for American sailors, and in 1916 an act providing for a basic 8-hour day on interstate railroads. Already in 1913 it had created a separate Department of Labor. Labor considered its greatest victory to be the clauses in the Clayton Anti-Trust Act of 1914 which exempted labor unions from prosecution as conspiracies in restraint of trade and which attempted to limit the use of injunction by federal courts. Gompers called these provisions the "Magna Charta" of labor, but this protection to labor, as we shall see, was largely nullified in succeeding years by the federal courts.

LABOR IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Even before our entry into the First World War the nation felt the effect of a labor shortage. Stoppage of the normal flow of immigration combined with the demand for workers in defense industries created a shortage which continued until the end of the conflict. The gap in the ranks of labor was partly filled by women, but the abnormal demand for labor strengthened the position of the worker and pushed wages upward. Higher wages increased the demand for commodities and this in turn helped to increase prices. During the war years, unfortunately, prices mounted more rapidly than wages, leaving the average worker worse off in 1918 than in 1914. The war did, however, stimulate the growth of unions. The membership of the A. F. of L. doubled from approximately 2,020,000 in 1914 to 4,079,000 in 1920.

Led by Gompers and the Executive Committee, who declared "this is labor's war," the Federation threw itself wholeheartedly into the war effort, removing restrictions and suspending regulations which might hamper all-out efforts. At the same time, Gompers insisted that the standard of living be maintained and that the war emergency should not be used as an excuse to injure labor organizations. The Administration recognized labor by placing Gompers on the Advisory Committee of National Defense and labor leaders were appointed to most of the war boards created by the government. In addition, numerous mediation committees were established by the various boards. Early in the war Gompers, as Chairman of the Committee on Labor of the Council of National Defense, called a conference of representatives of both employers and labor, at which both sides agreed not to take advantage of the emergency to press their demands in a way which would hinder the prosecution of the war. It was a sort of informal truce for the duration of the conflict, but, surprisingly enough, it worked fairly well. It did not, of course, end labor disputes or even prevent all strikes.

Wilson's Labor Policy

Early in 1918, in an effort to consolidate the labor policies and the mediation work of the numerous labor boards and committees, the President appointed Secretary of Labor Wilson as Labor Administrator, and under him a War Labor Board and a War Labor Policies Board were established. The latter was to determine the general policies of the government toward hours, wages, and working conditions, and, as far as possible, the relations between capital and labor.

The War Labor Board was a judicial body to which disputes between employers and employees could be submitted. Some 1500 disputes were settled by this Board; in a number of cases it prescribed the creation of shop committees and other means by which further controversies might be adjusted. Matters of wage adjustment on the railroads were handled, after government control was inaugurated, by a Railroad Wage Commission appointed by the Railroad Administration. By means of this machinery, by wage increases, and by the loyalty of both leaders and rank and file, labor disturbances were greatly reduced during the war. As a whole, organized labor gave a good account of itself during the First World War.

Summary

In the three decades from 1886, when the American Federation was founded, to the end of the First World War in 1918, the organized labor movement won an important place in American life. By 1918 almost 100 national or international unions had been organized with a combined membership of about 3,000,000, and most of them had united in a strong federation which could speak and act for them collectively. More than this, organized labor in general had worked out a method of action and a philosophy which it believed fitted the American environment and the American way of life. In the hard struggle upwards able leaders had appeared who could speak with authority for labor and whose words were listened to with respect. Politicians began to give due consideration to the demands of labor, and statesmen sought the advice and aid of its leaders. Substantial progress had been made.

Not all unions, as we shall see, had affiliated with the A. F. of L. Some of them did not agree with the Federation's policies; others, such as the Railroad Brotherhoods, were strong enough to prosper without joining the Federation. The story of outside unions and of opposition to the Federation within and without will be the topic of the next chapter.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Prepare a comparison (and contrast) of Samuel Gompers and Terence Powderly, considering appearance, temperament, abilities, strengths and weaknesses.
2. Secure details as full as possible concerning the Homestead and Pullman strikes and compare them with the Haymarket Riot as to causes, extent of violence, and effect upon the growth of organized labor.
3. As a whole-class project, collect as many examples of union labels as you can find. Be sure to consult illustrations on pages 262 and 263 of various kinds of union labels. Either individually or through class committees, interview merchants to find out how important the union label is in their customers' choice of purchases, and report to the class on the present importance of the union label.
4. Ascertain whether there is a city central labor union in your city. Have a committee of the class interview the secretary to find out the specific status of labor organization in your city.
5. "During the great reform period from 1900 to 1915 labor endorsed the direct election of United States Senators, the secret ballot, civil service reform, the initiative and referendum." For each of these, be prepared to explain labor's special interest or concern.

CHAPTER VII

Opposition Without and Within

UNTIL RECENT YEARS ORGANIZED LABOR HAS INCLUDED IN ITS membership but a small proportion of the nation's wage earners. Exclusive of agricultural workers only one-tenth were organized in 1910 and about one-fifth in 1920. It was not until the early 1940's that the number of organized wage earners reached a third of the total number. It should also be remembered that no single national organization ever included all members of organized labor. The Knights of Labor had no sooner reached a position of importance than the rival A. F. of L. appeared to challenge their power.

CONSERVATIVE UNIONS

Although the Knights disappeared and the A. F. of L. grew in strength, there were a number of unions, notably the Railroad Brotherhoods, who never joined either. Moreover, there were other unions, such as the Western Federation of Miners, which disliked the policies of the A. F. of L. and withdrew. Another example of this was the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (men's clothing), which split from the United Garment Workers of America in 1914 and remained out of the Federation until 1934. Some national unions have affiliated with the A. F. of L., then withdrawn, only to return years later. Others have been suspended or expelled. The most famous example of suspension came in 1936 when ten A. F. of L. unions comprising the Committee for Industrial Organization were suspended for refusing to disband the committee. Today

American labor is split into two great rival organizations, the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Besides these two great national federations, there are independent unions with a combined membership running into many thousands. In brief, there has never been complete unity in the labor movement.[1]

The Railroad Brotherhoods

Of the independent unions today, the most important during the past fifty years have been the Railroad Brotherhoods, or the "Big Four," as they are sometimes called. They are the Locomotive Engineers (founded 1863), the Railroad Conductors (1868), the Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen (1873), and the Railway Trainmen (1883), with a combined membership of about 425,000. All four were founded before the organization of the A. F. of L. Although many other unions of railroad workers have affiliated with the A. F. of L., the Railroad Brotherhoods have never joined. This unwillingness to throw in their lot with the larger movement has strengthened the belief that they represent the most conservative element in American labor, the "aristocracy" of American unionism.

Unlike the typical labor union, the organizers of the Railroad Brotherhoods were more interested in creating mutual insurance or benefit societies than in starting labor unions. Because railroading is a particularly dangerous occupation, the ordinary insurance companies would not sell policies to railroad men. These new railroad unions, therefore, organized their own companies to insure against death and accident, and as the years went by the union insurance companies grew into large business concerns.

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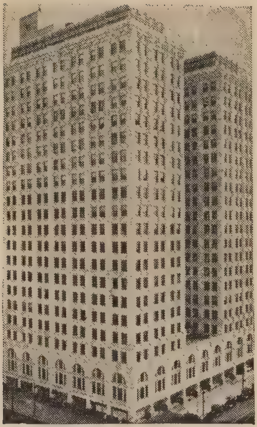
[1] Perhaps the most spectacular example in recent years of this restlessness of unions in affiliating and separating from the Federation is that of the United Mine Workers of America with over 500,000 members and led by John L. Lewis. This union took the lead in the formation of both the Committee for Industrial Organization and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Then it withdrew from the C. I. O. in 1942, only to petition for reaffiliation with the A. F. of L. in 1943. These arrangements were not completed, and the petition was withdrawn in 1944.

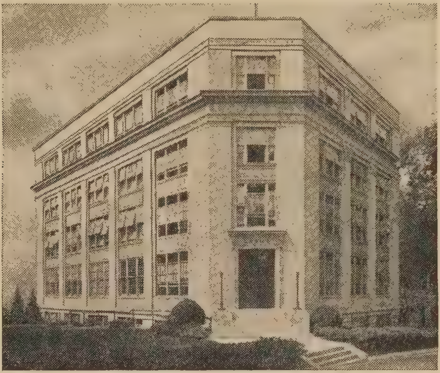


The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, in fact, became sufficiently wealthy to build their own skyscrapers in Cleveland, one of which is here shown, purchase coal mines in West Virginia, and organize the Engineers' Cooperative Bank of Cleveland in 1920.

Other buildings of the Railroad Unions include this big one in Kansas City, owned by the International Brotherhood of Boiler Makers, Iron Shipbuilders and Helpers;—

The Brotherhood State Bank

—this Cincinnati, Ohio, building of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks;—



—this Labor Building in Washington, D. C., owned by 15 of the Standard Railroad Labor Organizations, and housing their publication *Labor;* and—

—the Park Lane Villa in Cleveland, an apartment owned by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

There is no doubt that the emphasis from the start upon insurance and benefit features has strengthened the conservatism of the Brotherhoods. Anxious to safeguard their resources, they have opposed the strike, the strongest but at the same time the most costly of labor's weapons. Fortunately, they have not found it necessary to strike for the closed shop. Since the operating of trains generally requires skill and experience, the Railroad Brotherhoods have not had to face the competition of low-paid unskilled workers. Moreover, most of the railroad workers engaged in transportation operations have found it advantageous to join the unions.

This does not mean to say that there were not serious railroad strikes in the early years. In the period after the War between the States the railroad industry was controlled by some of the most unscrupulous "robber barons" who have appeared in American history, the "James boys in frock coats." The high-handed treatment of railroad labor by these men produced the inevitable reaction in the first great labor conflicts in our history, the railroad strike of 1877, and other severe strikes in the 1880's. The four Brotherhoods, however, were able to give up this form of pressure and for more than 30 years avoided a serious strike. Strikes were unnecessary, for the Brotherhoods were able to win many of their demands without direct action. This was due to their strategic position and their power to tie up an industry with heavy losses to the owners. When they began at the end of the 1880's to press for higher wages and seniority rights, they were successful.

Effects of Government Regulation of the Railroads

This favorable situation continued until the early 1900's when the rising cost of living brought increased demands on the part of the Brotherhoods for higher wages. In the meantime, however, the federal government in the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887 and the Hepburn Act of 1906 had taken over the regulation of railroad rates, which made it impossible for the railroads to pass on the cost of higher wages to the consumers. In this predicament both sides resorted to mediation as provided by government acts.[2] Awards through mediation satisfied neither side and when the four Brotherhoods demanded an 8-hour day in 1916 they refused arbitration. At this point Congress stepped in and voted a basic 8-hour day for railroad labor engaged in interstate traffic.

With the passing of the Adamson 8-hour act the government became definitely concerned with the problems of railroad labor as well as with those of rates and fares. This concern was strengthened during the period from December 26, 1917, to February 28, 1920, when the government took over the operation of the railroads during the First World War. So much better was the condition of labor during government operation, that the Brotherhoods after the war advocated government ownership. They worked hard to popularize the "Plumb Plan" which called for government purchase of the roads and their operation by a board of directors upon which the public, operating officers, and employees would be equally represented. Earnings, after operating expenses, maintenance, and the payment of the purchase price had been taken care of, were to be divided between the government and the operating companies.

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[2] An act providing for voluntary railroad mediation was passed by Congress during the Cleveland administration in 1888, to be superseded by the Erdman Act of 1898, the Newlands Act of 1913, and subsequent legislation.

To railroad workers the Plumb Plan seemed a democratic way to handle an industry already largely controlled by the government and one vitally connected with the welfare of the nation. Congress, however, had little interest in the Plumb Plan. It returned the railroads to private ownership under the Transportation Act of 1920 which increased government control and set up new forms of mediation for labor disputes. During the New Deal period the Crosser-Dill Act of 1934 established new methods of mediation, made arbitration practically obligatory but attempted to safeguard labor organizations. In 1937 the government widened its interest in railroad labor by taking over the existing pension systems of the railroads. Since then it has administered them through a Railroad Retirement Board with funds obtained through a pay-roll tax split between workers and management.

Independence from the A. F. of L.

Since 1889 the A. F. of L. has repeatedly urged the Railroad Brotherhoods to affiliate with them, but without success. The situation changed, however, in 1919 when the Brotherhoods were eager for the support of the Federation for the Plumb Plan. Each of the Big Four applied for charters in the A. F. of L. At the same time the A. F. of L. at their annual convention voted endorsement of the Plumb Plan over the opposition of Gompers and other leaders. In the end the negotiations for affiliation broke down mainly because of difficulties in adjusting the interests of the Brotherhoods with the various transportation unions in the A. F. of L. At the same time the Brotherhoods themselves were losing interest in the Plumb Plan. The Big Four still believed that they could get along without the A. F. of L. Whether this was true or not, there was no question but that the future of the Brotherhoods depended more than ever upon the good-will of the federal government whose control of interstate transportation tightened with each decade.

OPPOSITION FROM THE LEFT—SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS

Organized labor has not only been divided between unions which joined the A. F. of L. and those which preferred to stay out. Within the A. F. of L. itself there has always been a minority who have opposed the prevailing policy. This policy, as we described it in the last chapter, has been essentially one of adherence to craft unionism, avoidance of radical economic theories, and refusal to organize a labor party. As against this there have always been members who were thoroughly convinced that industrial unionism was better than craft unionism, that labor should organize its own political party, and that it should work to supplant the existing economic system ("capitalism") by some form of socialism. In line with the American tradition of democracy and free speech, they have battled for these ideals in their own unions and on the floor of the Federation conventions. So violent at times have been the conflicts over one or more of these policies that they have sometimes caused serious splits in the ranks of labor.

The Socialists and Labor

Perhaps the most persistent opposition to the prevailing policies of the A. F. of L. has been the various socialist groups. Socialism has had a long history in America extending from the utopian communities introduced by Robert Owen in the 1820's to the present time. During these years the great majority of socialists have been wage earners and they have exerted at one time or another an influence upon organized labor. In the years after the European revolutions of 1848 many German refugees and tens of thousands of German workingmen came to America, bringing with them the new ideas of Karl Marx and "scientific socialism." This group became politically active in 1876 when it organized the Workingmen's Party of the United States and changed the name the next year to the Socialist Labor party of North America.

Although the Socialist Labor party never attained real strength,[3] it is significant as marking the beginning of political socialism in this country. Its early leader was Daniel De Leon who believed that labor should develop a "class consciousness," endorse Socialist candidates and work for the overthrow of the capitalist system. He believed that socialist principles should be a condition of union membership. When he failed to win the more conservative unions in the Knights of Labor and the A. F. of L., he started in 1896 a rival organization, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance in New York City.

The Socialist Party

The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance was short-lived, but it had important results. It strengthened in the A. F. of L. a bitterness against "dual unionism" which has been characteristic of the Federation ever since. It also turned Gompers and other leaders so strongly against socialism that it greatly increased the difficulties of Socialists in influencing organized labor. Finally, it caused a split in the Socialist Labor party which resulted in the founding of the Social Democratic party in 1898, later called the Socialist party. The leaders of the new party were Victor Berger, a newspaper editor of Milwaukee; Morris Hillquit, a New York lawyer, and Eugene V. Debs, leader of the Pullman strike, and the presidential standard-bearer of the party (except in 1916) from 1900 to 1920.

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[3] It still exists and polled 14,861 votes in 1940.

Unlike the Socialist Labor party, the new Socialist party grew in strength for twenty years. Its vote in 1900 of 97,730 increased to over 919,000 in the presidential election of 1920. Although the party won thousands of the more socially minded middle class, its greatest strength was always among labor. Unlike the S. L. P., it made no effort to "capture" the unions. Its policy was one of education, rather than disruption. Nevertheless, its members maintained a persistent fight against the ideals of old-line unionism in an effort to swing trade unionism to the socialist cause and to win the votes of trade union members to the Socialist party.

Communism and Labor

The attitude of the majority of the Socialist party that the First World War was one of "commercial and financial" rivalry caused many members to withdraw during the war. It was split again immediately after the war by the withdrawal or expulsion of left-wing members who formed one or more of the Communist groups. The Communists, unlike the Socialists, attempted aggressively to "bore within" the unions in the hope of capturing them for the Communist cause. The leadership in this was taken by William Z. Foster and the Trade Union Educational League and it achieved some temporary success among certain of the New

York locals in the "needle trades," particularly the Fur Workers' Union. Its chief result, however, was almost to disrupt these unions by starting factional fights within between Socialists and Communists and arousing the more conservative elements of the A. F. of L. to fight back to destroy Communist influence.

Having failed in this program, the party changed its tactics and under the name of the Trade Union Unity League attempted to organize "dual unions" under Communist influence. Several such unions, notably the National Miners' Union in the soft coal fields, were started, and a number of strikes promoted. But the unions never developed into strong organizations and the strikes were usually unsuccessful. In 1935 the Communists again reversed their tactics when they shifted back from attempting to set up rival unions to the older policy of boring from within.

Movement toward a Labor Party

Although the Socialists and Communists were the chief advocates of a separate political party for labor, they were by no means the only ones. There were always union members, not affiliated with either of these parties, who believed that the A. F. of L. should forsake its "reward your friends and punish your enemies" policy and organize a separate political party. Resolutions to this effect were frequently presented in union conventions and sometimes carried. The United Mine Workers, for example, at their convention in 1914 resolved that the time had arrived "owing to the present economic conditions and the machinations of the interests in many places for the laboring people to come together in a political party."

This attitude became stronger in the difficult period faced by organized labor after the First World War.[4] Even the conservative Railroad Brotherhoods coöperated in the organization of the Progressive party which nominated La

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[4] This story is discussed in the next chapter.

Follette in 1924 and polled about 5,000,000 votes. So strong was the movement for independent political action at that time, that the A. F. of L. for the only time in its history officially endorsed a presidential candidate, and it was a candidate of a third party. It is true that the Federation reverted after the election to its old-time policy, but advocates of a labor party believed that this was a step forward and that it would be tried again.

Again the movement for independent political action appeared in the 1930's, particularly after the rise of the C. I. O. Small labor parties sprang up in various sections of the country and were active in local campaigns. The most important of these was the American Labor party organized in New York City in 1936. Interested primarily in supporting progressive candidates sympathetic toward the New Deal, it has won the backing of hundreds of thousands of labor votes in New York City and played an important part in swinging the city to the support of President Roosevelt, Governor Lehman, and Mayor La Guardia. When the major parties failed, in the opinion of the A. L. P., to nominate progressive candidates, that party has not hesitated to nominate its own candidates. This was the case in 1942 when their candidate for governor polled 400,000 votes. Unfortunately for those interested in developing a strong labor party, the A. L. P. split in 1944 when the "right wingers" withdrew.

OPPOSITION FROM THE LEFT—THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

The first important split in the ranks of the A. F. of L. came in 1897 when the Western Federation of Miners withdrew. Three years later they formed the American Labor Union in the hope of developing it into a rival of the A. F. of L. Daring and self-assertive, organized on an industrial basis and living in a region just emerging from the lawless days of the frontier, the miners of the Rockies had little sympathy with the conservative traditions of eastern craft unionism. Naturally inclined to direct action, political and economic, they also had no fear of radical leadership.

I. W. W. Leaders

Believing that the time was ripe for a more aggressive labor organization, the Western Federation of Miners, the American Labor Union, the Socialist Labor party and other groups called an industrial congress to meet in Chicago in 1905. There they launched the Industrial Workers of the World. Among those who came were De Leon, founder of the Socialist Labor party; Debs, the popular leader of the Socialist party; William D. (Big Bill) Haywood, soon to emerge as the real head of the new organization, and other able and experienced labor leaders. The delegates, representing perhaps 50,000 workers in 40 distinct occupations, committed themselves to industrial unionism and revolutionary socialism.

Program

Repudiating the A. F. of L. belief that the worker must improve his lot within the system of capitalism, they asserted that "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common." "Between these two classes," they declared, "a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together . . . and take hold of that which they produce by their labor through an economic organization of the working class." In a later revision of the preamble to their constitution, they went even further, proclaiming that "Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work,' we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wage system.' It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism."[5] Unlike the A. F. of L., they pledged themselves to organize skilled and unskilled alike. "We are going down to the gutter," declared Haywood, "to get at the mass of workers and bring them up to a decent plane of living."[6]

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[5] P. F. Brissenden, *The I. W. W.; a Study in American Syndicalism,* 351.

Organization

Organization of the I. W. W. was to begin with all members in a single plant. Local unions were then to be joined into national industrial unions, such as agricultural workers, lumber workers, and so on. Then the national unions in related industries were to become members of 13 departments. These large plans, which they believed would form "the structure of the new society within the shell of the old," were never fulfilled. Over-loaded with strong leaders, the I. W. W. was handicapped from the start with factional quarrels, which soon left the radical direct-actionist groups in control. Debs withdrew and De Leon was forced out because of their belief in political action. The paid-up membership of the I. W. W. was never large, amounting to but four or five thousand at the beginning of its great activity and probably never exceeding 60,000. Nevertheless the activities of its leaders and the revolutionary ardor of its followers gave it an influence far beyond its numerical strength. There were times when it seemed as if the I. W. W. might become a serious rival of the A. F. of L.

The Industrial Workers of the World found a following among the unskilled factory workers in the East and particularly among the migratory workers of the West who cut the timber and followed the harvest. Neglected by the A. F. of L. and ruthlessly exploited by employers, these workers found in the Industrial Workers of the World an opportunity to fight back against intolerable conditions. The organization first attracted notice in the Goldfield, Nevada, strike of 1906–1907 and in the fights it made for free speech at Spokane, Fresno, and other places on the Pacific

[6] Brissenden, *I. W. W.*, 87.

coast in 1909. The crest of its power came, however, in 1912 when it assumed the leadership in textile strikes at Lawrence, Massachusetts, and Paterson, New Jersey.

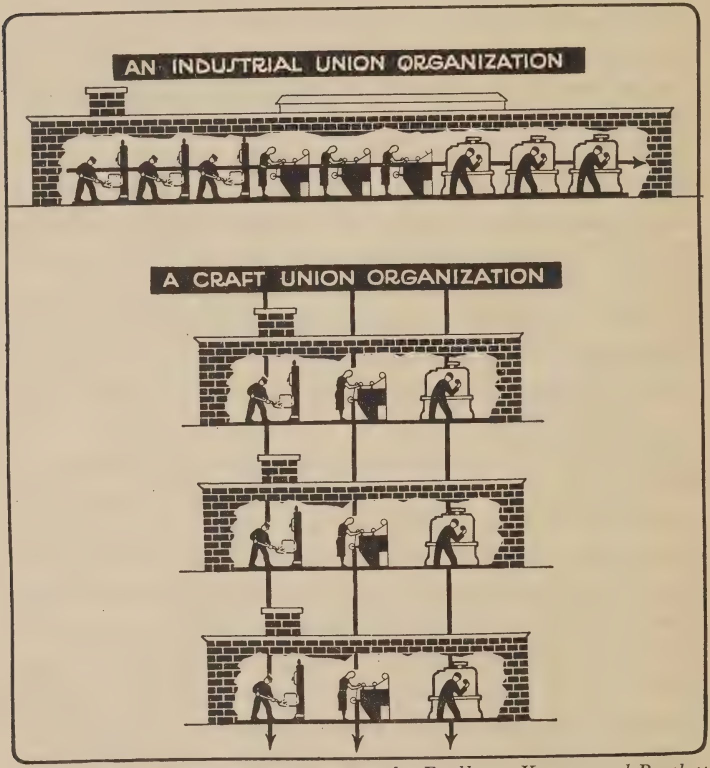
Opposition to the I. W. W.

Because of its bitter antagonism to the existing economic order, its willingness to employ sabotage, and its success among the unskilled and unorganized toilers, the I. W. W. was vigorously denounced and relentlessly opposed by capital and conservative labor alike. Gompers saw in the new organization a dangerous rival, and the Executive Committee of the Federation issued orders for the unions to fight it. Opposition of the I. W. W. to our entry into the First World War provided its many enemies with an opportunity to check it. With arbitrary severity the government rounded up its leaders and sent almost 100 of them to jail. Local, state, and federal authorities continued even after the war to harass its membership until the organization was virtually destroyed.

The I. W. W. played an important part in American labor history for only a brief period. Nevertheless, its influence was significant. First of all, it stirred the A. F. of L. to take more interest in the organization of unskilled workers. Undoubtedly the I. W. W. also strengthened the tendency toward industrial unionism at a time when the new mass industries were creating millions of unskilled workers. It was the first labor organization that actively organized Negroes and prepared the way for their larger participation in trade union activity. Above all, the I. W. W. improved conditions among many groups of workers, particularly in the lumber camps of the West.

COMMITTEE FOR INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION

By far the greatest split which has occurred in the ranks of American labor came in August, 1936, when the executive committee of the A. F. of L. suspended 10 unions which had joined the Committee for Industrial Organization. The very name of this committee indicates one cause for suspension—the old conflict between industrial and craft organization. From the early days the A. F. of L. was largely dominated by leaders who believed in organization by crafts.[7] Despite the A. F. of L. policy of organizing skilled


AN INDUSTRIAL UNION ORGANIZATION
A CRAFT UNION ORGANIZATION

From THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE *by Faulkner, Kepner and Bartlett* workers in craft unions, there have always been industrial unions in the Federation. One-third of the membership of the Federation, in fact, belonged to such unions in 1936. Among the strongest were the United Mine Workers, the International Ladies' Garment Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the United Textile Workers of America.

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[7] One labor writer describes the difference between the two types of organization as follows: "Craft unions organize workers on the basis of the tools they use and the work they do, irrespective of the industry for which they work. Industrial unions organize workers on the basis of the things they produce. Industrial unionists seek to organize in one union

Need for Industrial Unionism

That the organization of skilled workers along craft lines can be an extremely effective method has been amply proved in the construction industry and other trades. It is quite possible that in some trades it may always remain the preferable form of organization. On the other hand, it became clear by the 1930's that the Industrial Revolution and the development of mass industries had created new labor conditions which needed new methods of organization. The number of skilled workers in industry was relatively declining; their places were taken by masses of unskilled workers who did minor routine jobs on the assembly line needing but little training. For these workers there was little place in the old craft union. Even if there was a place, there remained the question as to whether it was good labor tactics to divide the workers of a factory or industry into 15 or 20 unions. In such a situation it is possible, and it has often happened, that certain unions in an industry might be on strike while others continued to work. The new mass industries—steel, automobiles, rubber, electrical equipment, etc.,—were large and dominated by powerful groups of capitalists. Organization of labor was bound to be difficult, and many felt that it could be accomplished only through the consolidated strength which industrial unionism affords.

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the men who work in a particular industry, no matter what sort of work they may do." A. B. Lewis, "Why the C. I. O.," L. I. D. pamphlet, 1937. Some economists describe craft unions as horizontal unions and industrial unions as vertical unions.

If organized labor was to play an increasingly important role in American life, the organization of workers in the mass industries, skilled and unskilled alike, was necessary. Indeed, many believed that the future existence of organized labor in this country depended on it. In the early 1930's the time seemed ripe. The National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 attempted to protect labor in its right to organize and the Democratic Administration at Washington was sympathetic. Labor itself was beginning to recover from the deep depression of 1929–1933 and was eager to take advantage of the new opportunities.

Efforts toward Industrial Unionism within the A. F. of L.

As a result, the A. F. of L. for the first time in its history made a serious effort to organize the mass industries; scores of organizers were sent into the automobile, rubber, aluminum, and other industries. Much progress was made and numerous charters issued to federal unions.[8] But the leaders of the A. F. of L. showed little interest in maintaining these federal industrial unions. They considered them temporary organizations pending a decision as to what union or unions should take them over. In such a situation many of them were absorbed or split between various craft organizations; others disintegrated from lack of outside help.

Eager for a more aggressive drive to organize the mass industries, leaders of the industrial unions within the A. F. of L. won approval at the Federation's San Francisco Convention in 1934 of a resolution endorsing industrial unionism in the "automobile, cement, aluminum and other mass-production and miscellaneous industries." The resolution also imposed upon the Executive Council the duty at the earliest possible date to "inaugurate, manage, promote and conduct a campaign of organization in the iron and steel industry." These same leaders, led by John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers, also forced an enlargement of the Executive Council of the Federation from 8 to 15, and Lewis and two other representatives of industrial unionism were put on it.

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[8] These were single locals usually organized on a plant basis (industrial) and affiliated directly with the Federation.

When the industrial unions came to the 1935 convention at Atlantic City they were fighting mad. Instead of an aggressive campaign to organize the mass industries, the Executive Council had done little. Only one national industrial union, the United Automobile Workers, had been formed during the year. Industrial unionists immediately introduced resolutions asserting that "the time has arrived when common sense demands the organization policies of the American Federation of Labor must be molded to meet present-day needs," and providing "for the organization of workers in mass-production, and other industries upon industrial and plant lines, regardless of claims based upon the question of jurisdiction." Strong speeches by Charles P. Howard of the Typographical Union, Thomas McMahon of the United Textile Workers and John L. Lewis, however, failed to win support of the resolution. Defeat was by a vote of 18,025 to 10,924. "A year ago," cried Lewis, ". . . I was beguiled into believing the Executive Council would honestly interpret and administer . . . the policy of issuing charters to industrial unions. . . . I know better now. At San Francisco, they seduced me with fair words. . . . Now, I am enraged."

Creation of the Committee for Industrial Organization

To Lewis and the other industrial leaders the problem was too important to be settled on the floor of a convention. The vote was merely a preliminary test of strength rather than a final decision. Less than a month after the convention closed the United Mine Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the International Ladies' Garment

Workers' Union, the United Textile Workers, the Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers, and the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers founded the Committee for Industrial Organization. In addition to the six unions just mentioned, Charles P. Howard, president of the Typographical Union, and Max Zaritsky of the United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers' International Union affiliated with the Committee in their personal capacities. Other industrial unions shortly after joined the Committee: Federation of Flat Glass Workers, the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, the United Automobile Workers, and the United Rubber Workers. Lewis was named chairman of the Committee, Howard, secretary, and John Brophy was made director. Later Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, became treasurer. Announcing its organization, the C. I. O. said that its purpose was "to encourage and promote organization of the workers in the mass pro-

International

William Green (left), president of the A. F. of L., here is shown talking with John L. Lewis, president of United Mine Workers, in one of the various attempts made to reunite the labor movement.

duction and unorganized industries of the nation and affiliation with the American Federation of Labor."

The reply of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. was prompt. In January the Council ordered the C. I. O. to dissolve and upon its refusal to do so suspended in August the ten unions then affiliated with it.[9] The charges leading to this action were that the C. I. O. had "set itself up as a dual authority" and was "engaged in fostering, maintaining and supporting this dual movement and in fomenting insurrection within the American Federation of Labor."[10] The result of the action was to sever the relationship of more than 1,000,000 trade union members from the A. F. of L. The legality of this action was attacked at the 1936 convention of the Federation, but the suspension of the C. I. O. unions was upheld. The convention in 1937 went even farther when it gave to the Council authority to expel the recalcitrant unions.

Whatever the official attitude of the A. F. of L. might be, the C. I. O. obviously meant business. Organizational machinery was set up, other industrial unions in or out of the A. F. of L. were invited to join, and large funds were raised for organizational work in the mass industries. The United Mine Workers, who had taken the initiative in founding the C. I. O., made large contributions in money and provided most of the important leaders in the early days of organization. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers contributed $1,000,000 to the organizational drive and the I. L. G. W. U. between $300,000 and $400,000 in addition to the services of organizers.

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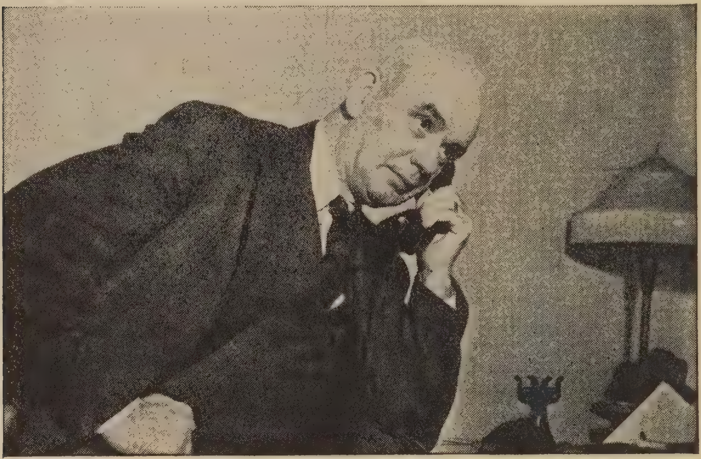
[9] United Mine Workers of America; Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America; Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers of America; International Union, Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers; International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; United Textile Workers of America; Federation of Flat Glass Workers; Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers; International Union United Automobile Workers of America; United Rubber Workers of America.

[10] *Report of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. to the Fifty-sixth Annual Convention* (1936), 48.

When the C. I. O. began its drive it had to face the power and wealth of some of the greatest industries of the nation, industries like steel and automobiles, long known for their open shop and anti-union policies. In spite of this, the result was amazingly successful. On its part the C. I. O. had ample funds, able leaders, and a sympathetic public and federal administration behind them. Moreover, there were millions of workers anxious to join a union.



Acme

The Steel Workers Organizing Committee, headed by Philip Murray, was intrusted with the job of organizing the steel industry for the C. I. O. Later this became the United Steel Workers of America. Murray became president of the C. I. O. in 1940, upon the retirement of John L. Lewis.

The Drive to Organize Steel

The C. I. O. planned to start its drive in the steel industry. The reason was the conviction of the miners that organization of the steel industry was necessary to preserve the unions in the coal mines, for the steel companies themselves owned many mines.[11] A Steel Workers Organizing

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[11] Known as "captive mines."

Committee, headed by Philip Murray, was intrusted with the job, and a little, slumbering union, known as the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, was taken over to absorb the new members. The Amalgamated was an A. F. of L. affiliate with a membership of 10,000 out of a potential 500,000 in the industry.

The drive began in earnest in the mid-summer of 1936, and despite bitter opposition, made rapid progress. Even some of the company unions were signing up with the S. W. O. C. Steel executives discounted the effort and called the organizing movement a failure. One of the financial weeklies, on the other hand, took a more realistic point of view. "For the first time in the history of the United States," it commented, "industrial management is faced with a labor movement which is smart and courageous, wealthy and successful—a movement, moreover, which is winning its battle by applying a shrewd imitation of big business organization and technique."

By the end of the year the S. W. O. C. had corralled over 100,000 members. Organization was clearly making progress. Management countered by offering wage increases, but the basic rates in steel were still so much lower than those in most major industries that the raise had little influence. Suddenly the United States Steel Corporation changed its life-long policy of opposition to organized labor and in March, 1937, recognized the S. W. O. C. as bargaining agent for its members, raised wages 10 per cent, and established an 8-hour day with time and a half for overtime. The C. I. O. had finally established collective bargaining in "Big Steel," and this success was followed by similar victories at Jones and Loughlin and other independent plants. By July 75 per cent of steel had been organized.

Victory in "Big Steel" had come after three months of negotiations between John L. Lewis and Myron Taylor, chairman of the Board of Directors of the United States

Steel Corporation. Taylor may have seen the handwriting on the wall, for the simultaneous success of the C. I. O. in the automobile industry gave some indication of the future in steel. In any case, United States Steel wanted no strikes or other interruptions such as were afflicting the motor car industry. Both Great Britain and the United States were embarking on a heavy rearmament program and good labor relations were necessary for continuous production. For the first time in years Big Steel saw prosperity around the corner and wanted to profit from it.

The Memorial Day Massacre

What appeared to be statesmanship to Myron Taylor was considered treachery by the leaders of "Little Steel"—Bethlehem, Republic, Youngstown Sheet and Tube, and Inland. When the S. W. O. C. pressed these companies for bargaining agreements in the spring of 1937, they met unbending refusal. Bitter strikes ensued and from the end of May until the middle of July industrial turmoil characterized the steel belt stretching from western Pennsylvania to Chicago. Efforts of labor to close the mills by picketing and other tactics were met by strike-breakers, machine guns, tear gas, and other methods of violence and intimidation. It was during this effort to organize "Little Steel" that a crowd of prospective pickets gathering on Memorial Day some blocks away from the South Chicago plant of the Republic Steel Company were charged by a band of 150 police. Eight strikers were either killed by police bullets on the spot or died later of their injuries, while scores were wounded. The "Memorial Day Massacre," as it came to be known, won back for the strikers much public sympathy, but the effort to organize "Little Steel" failed for the time being.[12] It was the first major setback experienced by the

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[12] The causes for failure are diagnosed by J. R. Walsh, *C. I. O.* (1937), pp. 92–95. This story of the Memorial Day Massacre is told in fictional form in Meyer Levin, *Citizens; a Novel* (1940).

C. I. O., and many were quick to predict that its days of expansion were over.

The Automobile Industry

In the meantime organization had made rapid progress in the automobile industry. The first objective of the C. I. O. had been steel, but the movement for industrial organization spread so rapidly that the first major battle, contrary to expectation, developed in the automobile industry. Following spectacular strikes in 1937 compromise agreements were secured in February with General Motors and in April with Chrysler which recognized the United Automobile Workers as the bargaining agency for its own members. In actual practice this meant the recognition of organized labor in practically all of the major units in the hitherto unorganized automobile industry, except the Ford Motor Company. Four years later (1941) even this concern, which had long taken the leadership in opposing labor unions, gave in and recognized the union.

Sit-Down Strikes

From this brief account of organization in the steel and automobile industries, it is evident that the victories were not won without numerous strikes. The year 1937, in fact, showed more strikes than any other year in our history, and a greater number of man-days idle. These strikes were watched with particular interest by the public because for the first time in this country labor used the "sit-down" technique on a wide scale. In the ordinary strike the worker quits his job and leaves the plant. In the sit-down strike he stops work but remains in the building close to his machine. The theory behind this was that his right to the job was as fundamental as were the property rights of the factory owner.

This refusal of the worker to leave the plant during a strike proved a powerful weapon, because it forced the employer to commit the first violence in a strike. Only by forcible ejection could the worker be ousted from the plant. Employers denounced "sit-down" strikes as illegal trespassing on property rights and certain states passed legislation to ban them. They finally disappeared after the Supreme Court outlawed them in the Fansteel decision of 1939. These labor conflicts were also characterized by a wider use of mass picketing than ever before in our labor history, a practice which sometimes resulted in violence and gave opportunity for agitation for new laws to curb labor in one way or another.

CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The activities of the Committee for Industrial Organization, of course, were not limited to the steel and automobile industry. Their organizers entered the fields of rubber, electrical equipment, radio, maritime workers, office workers and many others. During this process they were sometimes organizing in the same industries as the A. F. of L., and each organization accused the other of "stealing members." The A. F. of L. ordered its city central bodies to oust delegates from C. I. O. unions. The C. I. O. on its part chartered new unions and welcomed A F. of L. nationals who cared to affiliate with it. This conflict between the two groups sometimes went to the extreme of the two organizations supporting opposing political candidates and taking different points of view on the advisability of certain legislation.

Such disunity, of course, weakened labor, and numerous efforts were made, sometimes inspired by President Roosevelt himself, to heal the breach. Although negotiations between the two groups for reunion were undertaken at one time or another, they made little progress. Finally at their annual convention in 1938, the C. I. O. discarded its former name, Committee for Industrial Organization, and became the Congress of Industrial Organizations.[13] It adopted a full-fledged constitution, in which it stated its purposes to be the promotion of organization and collective bargaining, adherence to contracts, and the promotion of favorable labor legislation.

Form of Organization

In form and organization the Congress of Industrial Organizations differed little from that of the A. F. of L. Like the older organization, it was a federation of national unions governed by an annual national convention and like the A. F. of L., it encouraged the organization of city central bodies and state councils. It also had local unions unaffiliated with any national but chartered directly by the C. I. O. Instead of the 15 vice-presidents of the A. F. of L., it had only two.[14] Where the two great labor federations chiefly differed was in the emphasis placed by the C. I. O. on industrial unionism in forming, as they put it in their constition, "labor unions capable of dealing with modern aggregates of industry and finance."

The C. I. O. in Politics

The C. I. O. also seemed more sympathetic toward direct political action, as can be seen in their organization of Labor's Nonpartisan League in 1936. The purpose of the L. N. L. (which operated on a state basis) was to support the election of candidates sympathetic to labor whatever their party might be. Actually it was primarily interested in 1936 in the reëlection of Franklin D. Roosevelt. From Labor's Nonpartisan League sprang in the same year the

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[13] The I. L. G. W. U. did not participate because it opposed a dual national federation and in 1940 returned to the A. F. of L. The Millinery Workers and the Typographical Union did not join the Congress despite the support given the C. I. O. by their individual leaders.

[14] At the first meeting of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, John L. Lewis was elected president, Philip Murray of the United Mine Workers and Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, vice-presidents, and James E. Carey of the United Electrical and Radio Workers, secretary.

American Labor party, which in a sense was the New York section of the L. N. L. Generally speaking, the C. I. O. was composed of younger men who had recently joined the ranks of organized labor. Unhampered by tradition and older methods they had little hesitation in resorting to mass action and politics.

Even after the C. I. O. changed its name and adopted a constitution efforts were continued to bring the two labor groups together. Up to 1943, however, all such efforts had failed. Bitterness developed by the long conflict, the unyielding attitude of some of the leaders, and the conflict of groups for power all contributed to prevent it. Moreover, these conflicts over policy were apparent even within the ranks of both the C. I. O. and the A. F. of L. By 1940 John L. Lewis became so bitter against Roosevelt that he urged his followers in the C. I. O. to vote for Willkie and threatened to retire from the presidency of the C. I. O. if his leadership was repudiated by the defeat of Willkie. When Willkie was defeated, Lewis kept his promise and was succeeded by Philip Murray, a close associate, and for many years vice-president of the United Mine Workers. In 1942 Lewis led his mine workers out of the C. I. O., thus increasing by some 500,000 the membership of organized unions outside of the two great federations.

Summary

A study of recent labor history reveals two outstanding facts. First of all, organized labor increased tremendously —more than tripled—in the decade 1933 to 1943. In the latter year the A. F. of L. claimed 5,939,021 due-paying members and the C. I. O. 5,285,000. The United Mine Workers with about 500,000, the four railroad Brotherhoods with over 400,000, and other independent unions raised the total figure higher. Approximately one-third of American wage earners by that time were organized, and the trend to unionism was continuing. Labor unions had become an important part of the American way of life. Despite this growth it was clear, in the second place, that labor was as disunited as at any time in its history. Rapid growth had sharpened differences of opinion and of policies. Wage earners, like other Americans, had different ideas as to the best methods of promoting their welfare. In a land still blessed by political and economic freedom, the wage earner exercised his right to follow the policies he believed best. Whether this trend toward division of the ranks of labor has run its course will be largely determined by the situation of labor in the post-war world. But let us pick up the story of what happened to labor after the First World War before these later divisions appeared.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Prepare a report on the essential beliefs and policies of socialism and communism. Emphasis should be placed on the differences and points of conflict, so that you and the class will understand why these two groups opposed each other so bitterly.
2. Either by volunteers or class nominations, select teams and debate one or more of these topics:

   Resolved, that it would be better if all organized labor were in one organization.

   Resolved, that labor should be organized along industrial lines rather than craft lines.

   Resolved, that labor should support a National Labor party, with its own candidate for President.
3. The newspapers and magazines in June, 1937, gave much publicity to the "Memorial Day Massacre." If you have access to library files for that period, investigate the stories and see if you can accurately place the blame for starting the violence.

CHAPTER VIII

Decline of Organized Labor After the First World War

IN THE LAST CHAPTER AN EFFORT WAS MADE TO DESCRIBE and explain the factional differences which have plagued the labor movement during its entire history. To do this it was necessary to carry the story down to the 1940's. Let us now go back and pick up the general history of labor where we left off at the end of the First World War. The year 1920 found organized labor at the height of its power with a membership which had doubled since 1914.[1] Artificial war demands had provided a basis for spectacular membership gains in munitions, shipbuilding, car repairs, railroads, textiles, clothing, and other trades affected by the war. In the months following the armistice an unexpected continuation of prosperity allowed the unions even to increase their wartime membership. With added numbers and greater financial strength, labor pushed its new power aggressively. By 1920 it had brought wages on a par with the increased cost of living, and it had reduced the working week for skilled workers in industry as a whole from 53.3 hours in 1916 to 50.4 in 1920.

Proudly conscious of its war efforts, the American Federation of Labor optimistically proposed at its annual convention of 1919 a progressive "reconstruction program." It called for democracy in industry, abolition of unemployment, higher wages, shorter hours, equal pay for women for equal work, abolition of child labor, the right of public employees to organize and bargain collectively, limitation on the power of the courts, government ownership of public utilities, governmental development and operation of water power, and better regulation of corporations. It also demanded absolute freedom of expression and association, extension of workmen's compensation, establishment of government employment agencies and the abolition of those conducted for private profit, the building of model homes by the government, and aid in enabling the workers to own their homes.[2]

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[1] The average annual membership of the A. F. of L. was 2,020,671 in 1914, 2,726,478 in 1918, and 4,078,740 in 1920.

THE RETURN TO NORMALCY

Many of these demands were later achieved in the 1930's, but in the conservative swing back to "normalcy" during the 1920's they had little chance. Neither the employer nor the government was in a progressive mood. On the one hand were employers eager to deflate the wages of the war period; on the other were the unions anxious to maintain the gains made during the same years and to keep wages in line with the rising prices during the brief post-war prosperity which lasted until the late summer of 1920. Moreover, neither labor or capital had much interest in maintaining the machinery set up by the government during the war years to adjust or prevent labor conflicts. Both groups wanted freedom of action. In such a situation all of the elements were present for a labor conflict. If all parties had not been so anxious at the close of the war to return to "normalcy," the nation might have been spared, at least in part, the bitterest period of labor conflict up to that time in its history.

[2] Felix Flügel and H. U. Faulkner, *Readings in the Economic and Social History of the United States*, 839–842.

Post-War Strikes

Culver Service

This scene of strike violence occurred in Philadelphia in 1919 when a wave of post-war strikes broke out.

The first wave of post-war strikes broke in the late summer and early fall of 1919. Railroad shopmen, resentful of the slow progress of the Wage Adjustment Board in meeting their demands for higher pay, walked out in unauthorized strikes. The difficulty ended when the Director General of Railroads, at the instigation of President Wilson, made new agreements which raised wages. In the meantime, the soft coal miners were demanding increased wages and shorter hours on the grounds that the Fuel Administration had ceased to regulate coal prices and that their own agreement on wages (to last until the end of the war) no longer applied. After a strike was called President Wilson issued a proclamation that the country was still at war and his Attorney General obtained a court injunction forbidding officers of the union to encourage or maintain the strike. In the end the strike collapsed due to government interference, although the Fuel Administration later granted a 14 per cent increase in wage.

Most notable of the labor conflicts during 1919 was the strike in the steel industry. With a 12-hour day, a 7-day week and a 24-hour shift every two weeks, working conditions in this industry were a disgrace to American industry. At the same time, living conditions in the company-owned or controlled steel towns were about as bad. Labor unions had virtually disappeared in the steel industry after their defeat in the Homestead strike of 1892, but labor leaders believed that the situation was now ripe for organization. Organizers were sent into the steel districts and a list of demands drawn up including abolition of the 24-hour shift, a 6-day week, collective bargaining, and an American standard of living. When steel officials refused to negotiate, even at the behest of President Wilson, over 200,000 workers left the mills. Despite able leadership and wide sympathy throughout the nation, the strike collapsed. Steel owners pictured the strike as an uprising of foreign "reds," brought in Negro strike-breakers from the South, and sent state troopers and coal and iron police to intimidate strikers and crush civil liberties. On their side, Gompers, the A. F. of L., and labor as a whole failed to throw their full power behind the striking steel workers.[3]

These strikes of the shopmen, coal miners, and steel workers were but the most outstanding of a year dramatized everywhere by labor disturbances. In New York the harbor workers, streetcar men, clothing workers, and actors at one time or another were on strike. In Chicago there were strikes in the building trades and the transportation systems. Seattle was paralyzed for five days by a "general strike." In Boston a large part of the police force walked out in protest against inadequate wages. During the year over 4,000,000 workers participated in 3,630 strikes in nine of which more than 60,000 left their work. The year

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[3] Notable exceptions were the Amalgamated Clothing Workers which contributed $100,000 to the strike fund, and the International Ladies' Garment Workers which contributed $60.000.

1919 was the most troubled so far in the history of American labor. Although many of these strikes ended disastrously, hundreds of others were successful. The year 1919 actually showed an increase of 19.6 per cent in the membership of the A. F. of L. and 1920 an increase of 25.1 per cent. The latter year found organized labor, as far as membership was concerned, at the height of its power.

In the fall of 1920 the brief post-war tide of prosperity turned. It was followed by two years of economic recession, declining wages and widespread unemployment. Just as workers had struggled during 1919 and 1920 to bring wages on a par with the cost of living, so they fought during 1921 and 1922 to preserve the gains they had made. To labor the return to "normalcy" meant a standard of living at least no lower than it had been in 1914. Distress produced by the depression, reduction of wages, and an open-shop drive by employers, brought a new wave of strikes during 1921 and 1922. As in 1919 the most outstanding of these conflicts were again in the railroad and coal mining industry.

Failure of the Railroad Strike

Because of the high cost of living the Railway Labor Board (set up by the Transportation Act of 1920) had increased the wages of shop mechanics in 1920, but at the behest of railroad management had reduced them again the following year. The answer was a strike ballot and a walkout in July, 1922, of some 400,000 shopmen. After some efforts on the part of the government to bring about an agreement between workers and management, the Harding administration determined to break the strike. On September 1 the Attorney General obtained from Judge James Wilkerson of the Chicago federal court an injunction restraining the shopmen's union from using funds or engaging in activities which in the most remote way might have any connection with the strike. Wilkerson's amazing order, based on alleged violation of the Transportation Act of

1920 and the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, has gone down in history as the most far-reaching injunction ever handed down in a labor case. Although generally disregarded by the striking shopmen, it contributed to the collapse of the strike. Also contributory was the failure of other railroad unions to support them. Some of the strikers made agreements with individual roads and others went back without them. Generally they were forced to accept lower wages.

The Coal Strike of 1922

An effort to break the wartime wage scale in the coal industry resulted in the most complete tie-up ever experienced in that industry. When a wage agreement in the soft coal regions expired on April 1, 1922, the operators refused to renew it and insisted on reductions of from 17 to 40 per cent. The soft coal miners to the number of 500,000 were soon on strike and were joined in the summer by 150,000 miners in the anthracite fields. This was the first time that both groups had struck at the same time. When efforts at arbitration failed and certain of the operators attempted to open the mines, there was violence. The most notable example was at Herrin, Illinois, where a battle between the strikers on the one hand and imported strike-breakers and guards on the other resulted in more than twenty deaths.

With the largest supply of coal on the ground in the history of the country, neither operators nor the federal government at first showed much concern. As the strike dragged on through the summer months the situation became more serious. In July President Harding telegraphed to 28 governors to provide protection to the mines, and in Pennsylvania and Ohio the National Guard was called out. Many operators were now willing to sign regional agreements, but the United Mine Workers insisted on an "interstate agreement." In the end such an agreement was signed with about 20 per cent of the soft coal operators and the strike elsewhere gradually collapsed. In September the anthracite workers called off their strike by an agreement extending existing conditions for a year. At the same time they requested a federal commission to investigate the situation in the coal industry. Such a commission was appointed by Congress in September and made an extended report three years later.[4]

Unlike the labor conflicts of 1919 and 1920, those of 1921 and 1922 added no strength to the organized labor movement. During the latter years the A. F. of L. lost almost 1,000,000 members, a decline more rapid than the advance of 1919 and 1920. Unsuccessful strikes were only one cause. Depression and the resulting unemployment, estimated at 5,735,000 in August, 1921, was another. Still another was the lack of government support, and to a certain extent the decline in public sympathy. Important, also, as we shall see, was the aggressive and large-scale effort of many employers to weaken or destroy organized labor.

THE OPEN SHOP DRIVE

While organized labor struggled to maintain its position at the end of the war, organized management and businessmen generally took the position that wages should be deflated and the power of the unions broken. In such a situation severe industrial conflicts were inevitable. In an effort to prevent these impending conflicts, President Wilson called a National Industrial Conference to meet in Washington in October, 1919, with representatives from employers, labor, and the public. By the time it met, the steel strike was in progress. Labor moved that the conference support a resolution that the strike be arbitrated, but action was postponed until the whole problem of collective bargaining was discussed. When representatives of the employers and labor could not agree on a formula, labor withdrew and the effort to work out a national industrial policy collapsed. With the exception of the transportation industry, it was the last effort of the federal government to influence the problem of capital and labor during the reconstruction period.

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[4] Excerpts from this report may be found in Flügel and Faulkner's *Readings*, 590–593, and a digest of the report in E. E. Hunt, F. J. Tryon and J. W. Willits (eds.), *What the Coal Commission Found* (1925).

In the meantime employers' organizations of one kind or another had started an aggressive offensive to smash the unions. Specifically they launched a campaign for the "open shop" and in order to clothe it with an atmosphere of patriotism, called it the "American Plan." Their propaganda painted labor unions as radical, corrupt, responsible for high prices, and opposed to the American tradition of free enterprise, although their own organizations presumably were free from all taint. The "American Plan," as two labor experts describe it, "purported to abolish the 'un-American' closed shop, but as in previous open shop crusades, the destruction of unionism was the real objective."[5]

Leaders of the Open Shop Movement

As in earlier years, the leadership was taken by the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Metal Trades Association, and their numerous subsidiaries. By 1920 the drive was in full swing when the N. A. M. established an open shop department and issued special bulletins, and when the United States Chamber of Commerce in a referendum adopted by its members insisted on "the right of open shop operations" by its members. Not alone did the open shop drive receive encouragement and in some cases practical aid from Chambers of Commerce, but many old and newly formed local and state organizations sprang up to promote the movement. In the end, all sections of the nation were covered by hundreds of these organizations and by citizens' committees dedicated to the destruction of the labor movement.

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[5] Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, *History of Labor in the United States, 1896–1932*, 491.

The open shop drive was promoted by the usual propaganda methods—speeches, paid newspaper advertising, pamphlets, and frequent articles and editorials in trade papers. Corporations were pictured as the pillars of the American way of life and the employer as the natural leader of the American worker. Organizers were sent out to establish citizens' committees to fight union labor and pressure was brought upon bankers, manufacturers and consumers to boycott firms employing union labor. At the same time, employers' associations maintained blacklists of union workers and developed to a greater extent than ever before the technique of fighting union labor.

Although the open shop drive was directed chiefly against the building and metal trades, the pressure was felt by many different types of unions. With the power of American business and finance behind it, the drive made great gains. In scores of cities open shop conditions were maintained or established. Even San Francisco, noted as a strong union town, saw important labor defeats. The war gains in membership in the seamen's, packers', and textile unions were largely wiped out and the union organizations smashed for a decade. On the other hand, attacks on the printing crafts, needle trades, and the unions in certain other crafts failed. The boom in construction during the 'twenties helped the building trades to stand up against this attack.[6]

DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYER TECHNIQUE

During the open shop drive of the 1920's, employers developed a technique involving methods of a wide variety. Some were designed to intimidate workers and destroy unions; others were planned to win the coöperation and loyalty of employees. The old "iron-clad" oath of earlier days was revived as the "yellow-dog contract." This required the signing of a contract by a prospective employee that he would not join an outside union while in the employ of the concern. The yellow-dog contract was widely used in the coal mining industry, but it was also prevalent in other industries and among many concerns. "Of all attacks against organized labor," said one union paper, "the 'yellow-dog' takes first rank in meanness." Its wide use would obviously have destroyed unions, and organized labor fought the yellow-dog contract without ceasing until federal legislation made it illegal in 1932.

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[6] The open shop drive is discussed at length in R. W. Dunn, *The Americanization of Labor* (1927); in Perlman and Taft, *op. cit.*, Chap. XXXVII, and briefly in L. L. Lorwin, *The American Federation of Labor*, 201–204.

The use of the labor spy and hired strike-breakers probably goes back to the earliest days of unions, but it is doubtful if they were ever employed more widely than in the 1920's and early 1930's. How widespread was their use was never fully revealed until the La Follette Committee in the middle 1930's dug into the business of the private detective agencies. Long before this time, it was discovered, the chief business of these concerns was to provide labor spies and strike-breakers. It was the duty of a spy to keep the management informed as to what was going on among the workers. If no union existed, it was their business to see that none was formed. If one already existed, it was their concern to make it ineffective and disrupt it. If a strike occurred, the spy acted as an informer and as an influence to break up the strike while his agency provided the company with guards and strike-breakers. At all times it was the spy's business to inform the employer who the active union men were so that he might get rid of them.

Labor spying was evidently a thriving business. The La Follette Committee discovered that 230 detective agencies were engaged in it. How many spies were employed was never determined, but the estimates ran from 40,000 to 135,000 at a cost of from $80,000,000 a year up. One large automobile company alone admitted paying to various detective agencies approximately $1,000,000 in two and a half years. An experienced labor leader stated that he never "knew of a gathering large enough to be called a meeting and small enough to exclude the spy."[7]

The Company Union

One of the chief weapons used to disrupt the organized labor movement during these years was the "company union." Briefly stated, a company union is some type of labor organization established within a company and controlled by the company rather than by its members. Some of these organizations were little more than joint committees of workers and management to discuss common problems; others were associations to which all workers belonged with dues, cards, locals, rituals, and insurance plans much like *bona fide* unions. Still others were elaborately organized on a basis of employee representation patterned after the United States government with a house of representatives, a senate, and a cabinet. Company unions were often described in the 1920's as "industrial democracy," but since ultimate decision always rested with management, the term is hardly accurate. Organized labor criticized them as associations without the right to strike, without any real power, and organized solely by the employer for his own purposes. Not all company unions were established merely to forestall possible organization of the plant from the outside. They also were expected to promote a better spirit and morale among the workers and thus develop greater loyalty and efficiency.

Prior to 1917 not more than a dozen important plants had introduced the system of company unions. By 1927 there were between four and five hundred with a membership of over 1,400,000, approximately half that of the A. F. of L. Some of this growth was a natural carry-over from the shop committees set up during World War I by the National War Labor Board to stabilize labor conditions in industry. Some of it was promoted by management as a partial solution of their labor difficulties or to prevent organization from the outside. The growth of these unions was particularly rapid in the railroad industry after the collapse of the shopmen's strike in 1922, but it was also important in public utilities, in iron and steel, in electric supplies and in street railways.[8] Another period of rapid growth came in the early 1930's when company unions were used to stem the tide of unionism after the passage of Section 7a of the National Industrial Recovery Act. Although a few of these company unions formed in the 1920's and early 1930's still continue as "independent unions," the company union as such was outlawed by the National Labor Relations Act.

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[7] The story of the labor spy can be found in *Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, U. S. Senate*, 74th Congress pursuant to Senate Resolution 266; in Leo Huberman, *The Labor Spy Racket* (1937), a digest of the committee's findings; and in Edward Levinson, *I Break Strikes* (1935).

Stock Ownership by Employees

Another project pushed during the 1920's which had the effect of weakening organized labor, but at the same time improving morale and diminishing labor turnover, was the promotion of stock ownership. Possession of stock made the worker a part owner of the company for which he worked and presumably more interested in the welfare of the concern. As part owner of the company, he would be less interested in striking or in joining a union. Leadership in the promotion of stock ownership was taken in the utilities by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company; in the industrial field by the Eastman Kodak Company, United States Steel, and Bethlehem Steel; in the rails by the New York Central and the Pennsylvania, and in the oils by Standard Oil. Encouraged by payment on the installment plan, the number of employee stockholders grew to well over a million. So rapid, in fact, had this ownership developed that certain optimistic economists began to talk of an "economic revolution" in which the ownership of the nation's wealth was shifting into the hands of the wage earner.

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[8] On company unions see R. W. Dunn, *Americanization of Labor*, Chap. VI, and W. J. Lauck, *Political and Industrial Democracy* (1926).

How little foundation there was for this belief was evident upon examination of the facts. An investigation by the Federal Trade Commission made in 1922 and covering a cross section of American business found that employees comprised but 7.5 per cent of the common stockholders of corporations in which they were employed, and 3.5 per cent of the preferred stockholders, but held only 1.5 per cent of the common stock and 1.9 of the preferred. A later study made at Princeton University found that only 4.26 per cent of the stock of twenty important companies which had vigorously encouraged employee stock ownership was actually owned by employees.[9] When it is realized that a large proportion of this stock was owned by superintendents and by the salaried office and executive force, the proportion owned by labor appears even smaller. It was clear that the democratization of capital and business through this method had made little progress. Whatever the future might have been, the development of employee stock ownership came to a halt with the depression beginning in 1929. Workers might be willing to buy stock when it paid dividends and increased in value but not when it declined in price and paid no dividends.

Welfare Capitalism

It would be quite inaccurate to suggest that all of the methods employed by management in their relations with labor were designed to checkmate union organization. Nor were they intended merely to develop a contented, loyal, and efficient working force. Many of the efforts were based on a sincere, humanitarian desire to improve the lot of the worker. These efforts, which some economists have described as "welfare capitalism," include numerous welfare and service activities. Among the most helpful have been the establishment of various forms of group insurance covering injury, death, and sometimes sickness. In some cases the cost was met entirely by the company, in others by joint contributions of company and workers. It was estimated in 1927 that group insurance had been taken out to the extent of $5,600,000,000, covering 4,700,000; one insurance company alone wrote such insurance for 2500 firms and 815,000 workers. Also worthy of attention was the development of employee pensions. A survey made in 1926 revealed the fact that at least 400 firms, employing 4,000,000 workers, had established pension plans, 88 per cent during the previous fifteen years.[10] The extension of old-age pensions by private concerns, however, largely ceased when the federal government took over the responsibility under the provisions of the Social Security Act which was passed in 1935.

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[9] Federal Trade Commission, *Report on National Wealth and Income* (1926) and R. F. Foerster and E. N. Dietel, *Employee Stock Ownership in the United States* (1926). These findings are summarized in Dunn, *op. cit.*

It would take pages to describe in any detail the numerous projects promoted by one company or another. Almost all concerns of any size maintain a medical department and safety engineers. Many do follow-up health work with visiting nurses. Most well-appointed factories maintain lunch rooms furnishing food at reasonable cost. Mutual benefit societies and associations of one kind or another are organized which concern themselves with social functions, athletic activities, and services of one kind or another of benefit to the employees. Some even promote educational opportunities. One large rubber concern sponsors a "university" where its workers may take courses in both technical and non-technical studies. The same company at one time had a baseball team with some of the best professionals outside the major leagues. Where these projects are not managed by associations of employees, they are directly promoted and paid for by management.

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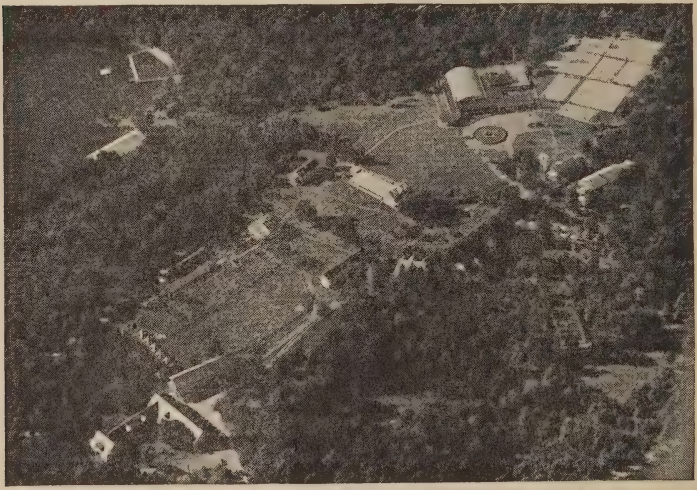
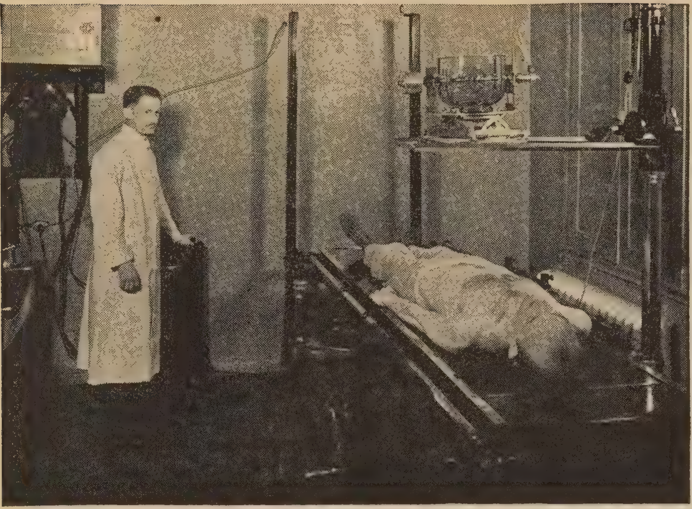
[10] Abraham Epstein, *The Problem of Old Age Pensions in Industry* (1926), 18–19.

This welfare activity reached its height in the flush and prosperous days of the 1920's, only to decline in the difficult years of the depression. With the expansion of organized labor in the 1930's, many of these activities shifted from management to the unions. Unions realize that many benefits have come to workers through these welfare projects, particularly those which promote health. Nevertheless, they are suspicious of company welfare projects, believing that they are motivated by a desire to prevent the growth of unions.



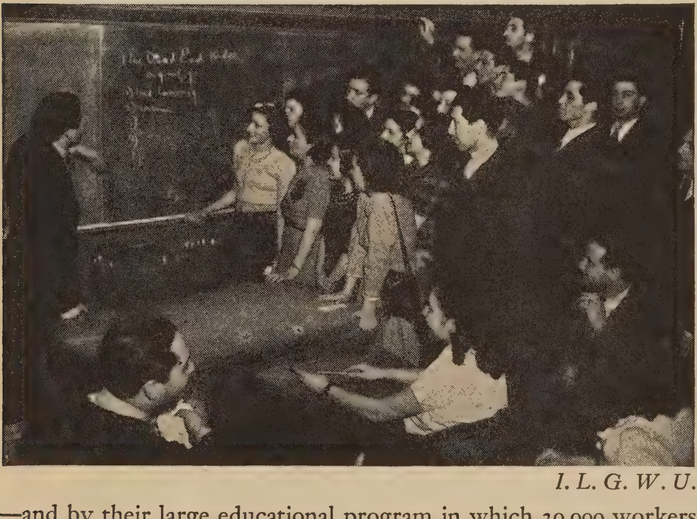
I. L. G. W. U.

Organized labor prefers higher wages rather than "hand-outs" and believes that workers through their own organizations can more properly take care of their own welfare work. That they can do so is illustrated in the million dollar vacation and recreational camp maintained by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union,—



Printing Pressmen's Union

—by their health services, such as this one at Pressmen's Home, Tennessee;—



I. L. G. W. U.

—and by their large educational program in which 20,000 workers are enrolled. Unions believe that aid from above undermines the initiative of the worker who should learn to act for himself.

GOVERNMENT AND LABOR

One of the handicaps which labor faced during the 'twenties was lack of sympathy on the part of government. In the case of the judiciary this often amounted to downright hostility. Certainly, labor's legal position declined notably during the decade. During the Wilson administration, labor made important gains. The Adamson Act (1916), it will be recalled, made the 8-hour day basic for workers engaged in interstate traffic on the railroads. The Clayton Anti-Trust Act (1914) exempted labor unions from prosecution as conspiracies in restraint of trade and attempted to set some limit on the use of injunctions in labor disputes. The Wilson administration also made some efforts to protect the status of organized labor during the war years.

With the end of the war the situation changed rapidly. Although the soft coal miners were eventually granted an increase in wages, the coal strike of 1919 was broken through the interference of Wilson and an injunction secured by his Attorney General. In a somewhat similar manner the Harding administration used the power of the government to smash the shopmen's strike of 1922. Harding also urged the governors to call out the National Guard during the coal strike of the same year. It should be remembered, however, that President Harding did use his personal influence and the prestige of his high office to end the 12-hour day in the steel industry. The interests of labor were largely ignored during the Coolidge and Hoover administrations except in one notable piece of legislation. For years organized labor had worked unceasingly to end the practice of the "yellow-dog" contract. When the Supreme Court, as we shall see, upheld the legality of such contracts, opposition became stronger. Finally, with the aid of George Norris in the Senate and Fiorello La Guardia in the House, the yellow-dog contract was outlawed when the Norris-La Guardia Act was signed by President Hoover in 1932.

Labor and the Courts

It was not so much the lack of interest or even the opposition of Congress or the administration which imperiled organized labor during the 1920's as the attitude of the judiciary. The opposition of the courts to labor legislation was by no means new. At one time or another almost every type of labor legislation had been declared unconstitutional. In general, labor legislation had been passed under the accepted theory that the state under its "police power" may pass laws to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. The courts, on the other hand, were inclined to interpret very strictly the state and federal constitutions and to declare such legislation unconstitutional.

The Fifth Amendment declares that no one shall be "deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law" and similar statements are to be found in most state constitutions. The idea was again incorporated in the first section of Amendment XIV when the same restrictions were placed upon the states. This conflict between the right of the federal government and the states to pass legislation for the welfare of the people and the constitutional provisions protecting liberty and property is at the heart of many judicial battles. Many labor laws have been interpreted as an infringement of liberty, an injury to property, an abridgement of contract, or as class legislation. In the long run, only the pressure of enlightened public opinion has changed the attitude of the courts.

The Fate of Welfare Legislation

Examples of the difficulty encountered by the federal government may be seen in legislation passed to protect women and children. In an effort to limit child labor Congress in 1916 passed an act to prohibit interstate commerce in products manufactured by children under sixteen. This act was based not alone on the power of Congress to pass acts for the "general welfare" of the country but also on its power to regulate interstate commerce. The Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional, insisting that Congress must not "control the states in their exercise of the police power over local trade and manufacture."[11] In 1919 Congress attempted to use its taxing power to ban child labor by placing a 10 per cent tax on the net profits of factories employing children under fourteen. This act was also declared unconstitutional.[12] Failure to end child labor through congressional legislation resulted in a proposed child-labor amendment to the federal constitution submitted to the states in 1924. Only 28 states had ratified by the end of 1942 but the purpose of the amendment, as we shall see in

U. S. Dept. of Labor Children's Bureau

To correct the evils of child labor, as illustrated in this picture of an eleven-year old worker in a shrimp shed in Texas, Congressional legislation was attempted. When that failed, an amendment to the Constitution was submitted to the states in 1924. Although only 28 states had ratified the amendment by 1942, various laws passed in the 1930's largely accomplished the purpose of the amendment.

[11] Hammer *v.* Dagenhart, 247 U. S. 251 (1918).

[12] Bailey *v.* Drexel Furniture Company, 259 U. S. 20 (1922).

the next chapter, was largely accomplished by various laws in the 1930's.

Another type of legislation which received a severe blow during the early 'twenties were the laws establishing a minimum wage for women. Between 1913 and 1919 fifteen states, along with Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, adopted such laws. The Supreme Court had sustained a minimum wage law in Oregon in 1917, but reversed itself when a new test case came before it in 1923 regarding a law in the District of Columbia. The Court interpreted it as "an unconstitutional interference with the freedom of contract included within the guarantees of the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment."[13] Fortunately the Court again reversed itself fourteen years later when it upheld such a law.

The Clayton Anti-Trust Act of 1914 had stated definitely that labor unions and members thereof were exempted from prosecution under the anti-trust acts. In other words, they were not to be considered as "illegal combinations or conspiracies in restraint of trade." Remembering the famous Danbury Hatters Case, labor had hailed the Clayton Act as a great victory and Gompers had called it "Labor's Magna Charta." Nevertheless the Supreme Court in the case of Duplex *v.* Deering (1921) interpreted certain actions of the International Association of Machinists in their effort to organize the Duplex Company as a secondary boycott and so illegal under the anti-trust acts. This decision cut the heart out of the protection which Congress intended to give unions in the Clayton Act. It was particularly dangerous to unions, for part of the normal procedure or technique of most strikes is to bring pressure upon the employer by urging consumers not to buy his products. To make the situation worse, the Supreme Court in another case brought before it under the Sherman Act held that unions were suable for damages committed in strikes.[14] That is, unions as a whole could be sued for damages on the same basis as an individual. This decision was similar to one handed down in the famous Taff Vale case in Great Britain (1901), a decision which more than any other single thing gave new life to the development of a British Labor party.

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[13] Adkins *v.* Children's Hospital, 261 U. S. 525 (1923).

In addition to exempting labor unions from prosecution under the anti-trust acts, the Clayton Act had also attempted to limit the use of injunctions in labor disputes. This part of the act was also destroyed by the Supreme Court, particularly in the case of Truax *v.* Corrigan (1921), when it virtually nullified an Arizona law limiting the use of injunctions in labor disputes. Other decisions of the Supreme Court also weakened the position of labor. In 1915, for example, it declared unconstitutional a state law aimed to prevent an employer from forcing his employee to agree not to join a union during the latter's term of service ("yellow-dog contract").[15] It later upheld a decision that it was illegal to try to organize employees who had signed a "yellow-dog contract."[16] These decisions, as we have pointed out, finally resulted in the passage of the Norris-La Guardia Act.

So far had the Court swung to the right that it even attempted greatly to limit peaceful picketing.[17] This attitude of the highest court not only discouraged social legislation but actually encouraged laws harmful to labor. In theory labor still had the right to organize, to strike, to picket, and to boycott; but in practice, said one of the ablest labor lawyers, "the rules have been hedged in by so many exceptions and weakened by so many modifications and departures that they have been reduced to the status of an abstract social philosophy rather than the statement of positive law."[18]

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[14] United Mine Workers *v.* Coronado Coal Company, 259 U. S. 344.

[15] Coppage *v.* Kansas, 236 U. S. 1 (1915).

[16] Hitchman Coal and Coke Co. *v.* Mitchell, 245 U. S. 232 (1917).

[17] American Steel Foundries *v.* Tri-City Trades Council, 251 U. S.

[18] Morris Hillquit in *New Leader* (December 4, 1926).

REACTION OF LABOR

Other influences besides the anti-union drives and court decisions proved harmful to labor during the 1920's. In certain industries such as mining and railroads the number of persons employed actually declined. Conservative estimates show that even in the boom years of the 1920's the average number of unemployed ran well over a million and a half while in the recession years of 1921, 1922, 1924, and 1927 it was double that number. Much of this was due to "technological unemployment," that is, the substitution of machinery for men. "Technological unemployment" has been more or less continuous since the Industrial Revolution, but it is doubtful if it has ever been more acute than in the period since the First World War.

Along with "technological unemployment" was the development of the "speed-up" and the "stretch-out." Production expected of workers was so increased that only young men could stand the strain. Workers over forty found it difficult to get jobs and the ranks of the unemployed were increasingly filled with middle-aged men. Also harmful to organized labor were the geographical shifts in certain industries, particularly textile manufacturing. Many factories moved to the South, others from the large cities to smaller towns. These shifts were due in part to a search for cheap native and foreign labor and an attempt to avoid paying the higher wages required by the unions.

There were other influences in the 1920's difficult to measure but necessary in building up a complete picture of labor during these years. Higher wages, an improved standard of living accompanied in some cases by ownership of company stock, and insurance policies tended to develop a "middle-class psychology" or attitude on the part of workers. Unions seemed unnecessary and many workers lost interest in labor organization. In earlier years unions had provided not only an opportunity for economic improvement, but also a center for recreational and even intellectual activities. With the development of the automobile, the radio, and the moving picture the wage earner found new interests and recreational facilities outside of union halls.

Demand for New Policies within Labor

The devastating effect of the open shop drive, the unfriendly attitude of government and the courts, the decline in membership and of interest in labor unions naturally had its effect upon the unions. Particularly during the early 1920's, there was widespread dissatisfaction with prevailing policies and leadership. There were strong demands for more aggressive organizational work, and, as we pointed out in the last chapter, for a more active participation in politics. Some unions were demanding the government ownership and operation of mines, railroads and other public utilities; others called for a national system of health insurance and old-age pensions. Dissatisfaction with the leadership led in 1921 to the first contest for the presidency of the A. F. of L. since 1912. The more progressive delegates backed John L. Lewis, but Gompers kept his position by a vote of 25,022 to 12,324. Gompers died in 1924 but his policies have been largely followed by his successor, William Green, annually elected president of the A. F. of L. since that date.

Despite the fact that the annual conventions of the A. F. of L. in 1920 and 1921 had approved government ownership of railroads, mines, and public utilities, as well as old-age pensions and other measures of this type, the Executive Committee showed little interest in promoting them. In fact, at the Portland convention of 1923 they issued a "manifesto" declaring that "the continuing clamor for the extension of state regulatory powers under the guise of reform and deliverance from evil can but lead into greater confusion and more helpless entanglements." Most of the important leaders strenuously opposed real changes in policy or leadership and branded the advocates of these changes as "reds." In their opinion new times had not changed the wisdom of old policies.

The reaction of the leadership to the decline of organized labor and the demand for a new policy, however, was by no means entirely negative. A concession was made to the progressive demands for the endorsement of La Follette, and some unions took an active part in the campaign of 1924. Although generally unsuccessful, some organizational work was undertaken. A new effort to organize the steel workers was again made in 1923 but it failed completely. In 1924 the Executive Committee authorized Gompers to prepare a campaign for organizing women. Lack of interest on the part of some unions and opposition of others ended this effort.

Failure of Efforts to Increase Unionism

By the middle 'twenties automobile manufacturing had become the nation's most important industry in value of products. If organized labor was to maintain its position in American life, it was clear that this industry must be unionized. After a year of conferences between various unions largely given over to the problem of jurisdiction, a half-hearted attempt was made in 1927 which got nowhere. During the next three years the Federation was drawn into the struggles of the unorganized textile workers of the South when bitter strikes broke out at Gastonia and Marion, North Carolina, Elizabethton, Tennessee, and elsewhere. Unlike many other industries, textile manufacturing had been depressed during the decade. Wages already low were cut further, hours lengthened, and the stretch-out introduced. As the textile business picked up in 1929, spontaneous strikes broke out in an effort to improve conditions, and the Federation was besieged with pleas for help. Organizers were sent down and President Green himself made a speech-making tour of the South. In the end few gains were made. Shifting policies of the Federation, lack of financial support for the organizing drive, and opposition by southern employers account for much of the failure. More important than all else, however, was the severe depression which hit the nation in the fall of 1929 and immediately curtailed operations in the textile industry.

Other efforts to meet the difficult problems of the 1920's were little more successful than the organizing drives in the automobile and textile industries. To counteract technological unemployment and spread the work over a larger proportion of the workers, the Federation urged the 5-day week, but success was limited. Instead of the old slogan, "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work," labor talked of the need of the "social wage," that is, a wage which would recognize the increased production of labor as a result of new inventions and thus afford a decent standard of living. In place of the old conflict between labor and capital, many unions offered coöperation with management to increase efficiency and production in exchange for recognition of the union. As a whole, management ignored this invitation and, except in the men's clothing industry, management-labor coöperation made little progress.

The Beginning of Labor's Awakening

To meet the anti-union propaganda, labor awoke to the fact that it needed more knowledge of actual conditions in order to defend itself. The Federation urged its unions to collect information and many of them began to employ economists and establish research staffs. It also realized more acutely than ever before the need of workers' education and in 1923 affiliated itself with the Workers' Education Bureau. Supported in part by the unions, the Workers' Education Bureau is concerned mainly with coördinating and promoting the educational efforts of the unions. It publishes and distributes books and pamphlets, holds educational conferences, and gives what aid it can to the support of adult education among union workers. To counteract the influence of employers' insurance schemes, the Federation urged its members to take out insurance with union companies. One such concern, the Union Labor Life Insurance Company, was formed in 1924 to write insurance for workers in any industry. Some efforts were also made during the 1920's through an intensive campaign to stimulate a demand for union-labeled goods.

Despite the lack of government interest in labor problems during these years, the legislative activities of labor unions, particularly in the late 'twenties, were not without results. In some states legislation was passed strengthening the child labor laws and those limiting the working hours of women. Many of the states also passed amendments to improve the workmen's compensation laws. In Congress labor was successful in securing legislation to raise wages and improve conditions for federal employees. Labor's long campaign for greater immigration restrictions was finally victorious in the Immigration Act of 1924. The greatest legislative victory of labor during these years, as we have already noted, was the Norris-La Guardia Act of 1932. This act not only banned the yellow-dog contract, but also attempted to limit the use of the injunction in labor disputes. The Clayton Act had tried to do this, but court decisions had so whittled away the anti-injunction clause that a new act was necessary to clarify and strengthen the law.

Summary

As a whole, the decade of the 'twenties was a discouraging period for organized labor. The membership of the A. F. of L. of 4,078,740 in 1920 had sunk to 2,961,096 in

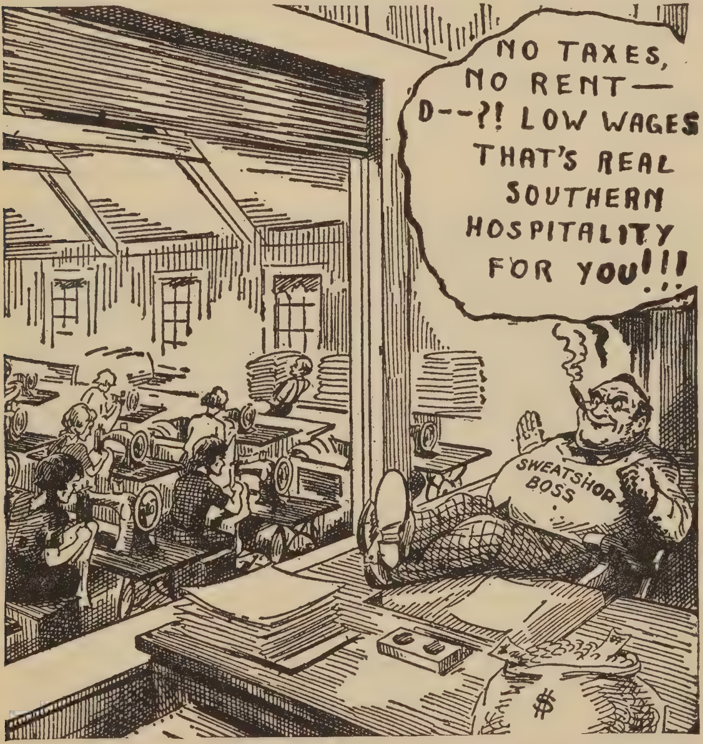
1930 and was to sink to 2,532,261 in 1932 as a result of the depression. Similar declines were registered in the independent railway unions. On the other hand, employer-dominated company unions had grown tremendously. The chief losses during the decade were in industries where machinery was displacing hand labor, in the sick industries such as mining and textiles that had not recovered from the war and post-war boom, and certain other industries which had been artificially stimulated by the war. Of the 105 international unions in 1929, only 44 had held their own or had grown since 1925. Most of these were in the building trades, the printing trades, transportation, government service, or the amusement business which had experienced notable prosperity and expansion in certain areas. More disastrous, perhaps, than the absolute decline in union membership as a whole was the relative decline in the power and prestige of trade unionism and the deterioration in union morale.

The difficulties which labor faced in the 1920's were increased with the coming of the great depression. Widespread unemployment, as we shall see in the next chapter, reduced their membership even more, exhausted their treasuries and caused great suffering. The New Deal efforts toward recovery, however, gave to labor unions a new lease on life and a chance to win back their former position.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. During a strike in an Indiana factory in the 1920's, a newspaper in the city affected contained this statement: "Mayor Blank has called on all citizens to oppose the strikers." List the assumptions which this statement requires, and criticize them.
2. In this chapter there is a reference to "welfare capitalism." Investigate this topic further and find specific cases where employers have provided or contributed largely to health insurance, pensions, and to improvement of conditions of working and living of their employees.

3. From the educational director of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (New York City), or some other progressive union, secure information concerning its social and educational program.
4. On the basis of information secured as suggested above, have members of the class conduct a panel discussion of the educational and social needs of wage earners and the best ways by which they should be met.
5. Find out if you can the specific provisions of the Immigration Act of 1924. List all of the reasons you can find for labor's support of the measure in general, and ascertain whether its specific provisions favored labor's cause.



6. Study this cartoon and list some of the reasons why industries have been moving from the North and East to the South.

(I. L. G. W. U.)

CHAPTER IX

Labor and the New Deal

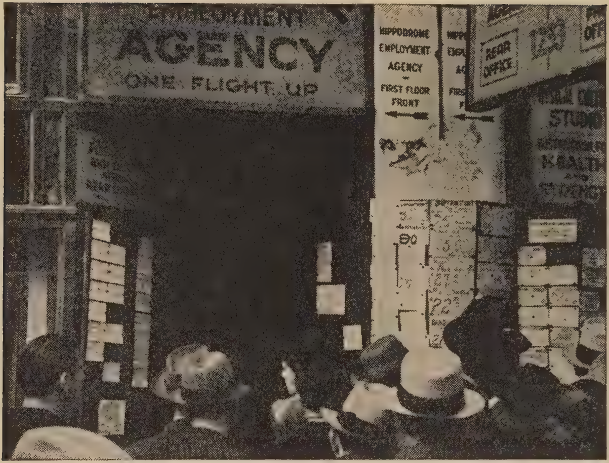
THE BOOM ERA OF THE 'TWENTIES, WHICH SOME ECONOMISTS believed would last forever, came to a sudden end in the autumn of 1929. With scarcely any interruption economic conditions continued to grow worse until the late spring of 1933. Those who viewed the glittering prosperity of the 'twenties as a permanent thing, found it difficult to understand the sudden crash. Close students of American economic life, however, had no difficulty in discerning fundamental flaws in the business structure. Certain industries, notably coal mining, textiles, shipbuilding, railroad equipment, and leather manufacturing, failed to revive after the post-war depression. More important was the failure of agriculture to respond to the economic recovery of the 'twenties. Over-expansion during the war period, the slowing up of population growth, changes in the eating habits of the American people, and increased competition from other parts of the world explain in part the condition of American agriculture. The poverty of Europe after the war combined with American high tariffs made it difficult for Europe to pay off her debts either in gold or commodities and limited the amount of foodstuffs and industrial products which she might have bought from America. In brief, the prosperity of the 'twenties was by no means universal in the United States. Certain industries and certain regions enjoyed an active business and labor received high wages; other industries and other groups of wage earners suffered from a continuous depression.

EFFECT OF THE DEPRESSION ON LABOR

Even in the industries which were prosperous there were elements tending to undermine the economic structure. The most important fact was the unequal distribution of the wealth created. Although real wages for manual workers improved in the prosperous industries, the relative proportion of the wealth going into profits (including those left in the business) increased, and the proportion going into wages and salaries declined. The result of this was the tendency to pile up wealth where it would be used chiefly for further expansion of industrial units rather than to place it in the hands of those who would use it to purchase manufactured goods. This produced a situation fundamental in bringing on all depressions—a production of commodities beyond the ability of the consumer to purchase.

Farm Security Administration, photo by Vachon

When production of commodities is greater than the ability of the consumer to purchase, depressions occur. Then factories close down and fall into disrepair or operate only part-time, workers lose their jobs and relief lines like this, consisting of young men and old men, men with families dependent on them, and men alone in the world, begin to appear in all parts of the country. Naturally, as a result of this condition, purchasing power declines further, and the depression deepens.


EMPLOYMENT
AGENCY
ONE FLIGHT UP
HIPPODROME
EMPLOYMENT
AGENCY
FIRST FLOOR
FRONT
REAR
OFFICE

Farm Security Administration, photo by Rothstein

—With the spread of unemployment, employment agencies are crowded, and wage earners are unable to pay their debts or to purchase the necessities of life.

Farm Security Administration, photo by Rothstein

—Then the retailer in turn is badly hit, buildings like these are left vacant;—

Farm Security Administration, photo by Rothstein

—the professional man loses his clients, banks fail, and bankruptcy and misfortune are widespread.

Another flaw in the economic structure, which we noted in the last chapter, was the continual unemployment throughout the "prosperous 'twenties." Some of this, as we said before, was due to "technological unemployment," but not all. In certain industries, such as mining and agriculture, there was an actual decline in the number of persons employed because the industries themselves were depressed. In other words, the trend of employment was not keeping pace with the growth of population or the increase in productive equipment.

Widespread Effects of the Depression

Whatever the causes of this particular depression, all economists are agreed that it was the most disastrous in the history of the nation. During the first four years of the depression (1929–1933) industrial production and the volume of trade dropped more than 50 per cent. In the two years, 1930–31, 3,750 banks failed. The income of farmers, which had declined sharply throughout the 1920's, suffered a further deflation. Between 1929 and 1932 farm values declined 33 per cent and gross income over 50 per cent. More striking was the devastation wrought in foreign trade. Value of exports declined from $5,241,000,000 in 1929 to $1,611,000,000 in 1932 and imports from $4,399,000,000 to $1,323, 000,000.

No group, however, suffered more from the depression than labor. According to government estimates, one-third of the wage earners were unemployed by 1933 while payrolls had decreased more than 50 per cent. Estimates of the American Federation of Labor put the unemployed in October, 1930, at 4,639,000; in October, 1932, at 11,586,000 and early in 1933 at over 13,000,000. Some estimates were much higher. When it is remembered that a large proportion of those unemployed were heads of families upon whose wages others were dependent, the number affected by unemployment ran into many millions more. A fair estimate of the number on public relief in 1934 was 17,000,000. In addition to the millions thrown out of work were a larger number working part-time and living on reduced income.

Although organized labor had always concerned itself with unemployment, it had evolved no definite program of dealing with the problem beyond the sick, death, unemployment, old-age, and disability benefits which the various unions paid out from accumulated funds. When the A. F. of L. faced its first great depression in 1893 it had asserted that "when the private employer cannot or will not give work, the municipality, state or nation must." Nevertheless for almost 40 years thereafter it turned its back on government programs of old-age pensions or unemployment insurance that were making progress in the older industrial nations of Europe. Opposition was based on the fear that government-controlled insurance plans would subject the worker to undue control by the law, deprive him of his freedom to fight for better conditions, and perhaps force him to accept jobs in non-union plants.

Demands for Governmental Relief

As the depression grew deeper, however, the attitude of organized labor toward government help changed. For one thing, its own benefit funds were rapidly disappearing while unemployment continued to increase. In the four years 1928–1931 the unions paid out over $71,581,000. Faced by this situation, it advocated, first of all, the establishment of a coördinated system of city, state, and federal employment bureaus, financed in part by federal funds. A bill to put this into effect was passed in March, 1931, but vetoed by President Hoover. As the inadequacy of private relief funds and city welfare became evident, the Federation supported measures for federal relief and public works projects introduced into the Senate in 1932 and 1933. Finally the Federation reversed itself on unemployment insurance. At the Cincinnati Convention of 1932 the delegates voted overwhelmingly for compulsory unemployment insurance managed by the states. The severity of the depression, the depletion of their own benefit funds, and pressure from the rank and file finally brought this change in policy.

During the dark days of the depression labor received little aid from the government. Mr. Hoover glorified "rugged individualism" as the cure for our economic woes, and insisted that prosperity was just around the corner. He did, however, call a conference of business, labor, and farm leaders in November, 1929, to "organize against the panic." The conference declared against a policy of wage reductions and the Federation in turn recommended that unions refrain from demanding wage increases. This did little good, for employers were soon cutting wages on the plea that it was the only way to keep in business. Through the

Agricultural Marketing Act, passed shortly before the depression, some efforts were made to help the farmer. Likewise efforts were made by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (set up by Congress in 1932) to save railroads, banks, and various industries from collapse. Apparently the idea of the Hoover administration was to rebuild the economic structure from the top on the theory that prosperity would then trickle down to the masses. The RFC did save many concerns from failure and in doing so also saved many jobs for workers.

Some relief came to millions of needy veterans in 1931 when Congress passed a bonus bill over the Presidential veto, but the effect was temporary. As the election of 1932 approached, however, Congress gave more attention to the conditions of the wage earner. After voting down two bills for unemployment relief Congress finally authorized the RFC to lend $1,800,000,000 to states, cities, and other governmental agencies for public projects and direct relief. It also authorized the federal government to spend $322,000,000 for public works. As we look at the history of the depression during the Hoover administration, two facts seem clear: first, Congress and the administration delayed too long in undertaking an aggressive fight against the depression; and second, that labor was the last of the economic groups to receive attention. Only one excuse, perhaps, can be offered for this failure and delay; the federal government had rarely interfered in any way with the course of previous depressions and such action seemed contrary to American traditions.

ELECTION OF 1932 AND THE EARLY DAYS OF THE NEW DEAL

The Democrats, who nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932, promised in their platform an "extension of federal credit" to provide relief for the needy, shorter hours of labor, unemployment and old-age insurance. But it would have made little difference whether the platform contained any provisions for labor or not. Nor would it have made much difference who the Democrats nominated for the presidency. In 1932 the American people voted primarily against the depression. Roosevelt's reputation as a liberal helped him, of course, as did his rather vague promises to aid the "forgotten man" and to inaugurate a "New Deal." In any event, the Democratic nominees won the electoral votes of all the states but six, an overwhelming majority of the popular vote, and control of both houses of Congress.

Between the election of 1932 and the inauguration of the new President in March, 1933, the depression reached its lowest point. The whole economic structure seemed on the verge of collapse, as Roosevelt picked up the reins of office and called Congress into special session to pass relief legislation. Action was rapid and during the special session of the Seventy-third Congress a score of major acts were passed dealing with various aspects of the economic situation. These acts and those which followed roughly comprise what Roosevelt and the nation came to term the "New Deal."

New Deal Philosophy

Was there any general plan or philosophy behind the New Deal? Some of the acts passed clearly fell in the category of emergency legislation to help the nation pull out of the depression; others appeared to be a permanent effort to reform or change certain aspects of our economic life. The President's own answer to the question as given in 1934 was as follows:

> What we seek is balance in our economic system—balance between agriculture and industry and balance between the wage earner, the employer, and the consumer. We seek also balance that our internal markets be kept rich and large, and that our trade with other nations be increased on both sides of the ledger.

If such a balance was to be achieved, definite action must be taken to improve the lot of the wage earner. Although the effects of the various acts of the New Deal legislation are so interwoven that they influenced all groups of people, certain of them bore more specifically upon the problems of labor. The objectives of the labor legislation were (1) relief of the unemployment situation, (2) improvement in wages and a decrease in hours in the low-paid sweated industries, (3) the abolition of child labor, (4) security against unemployment and old age, and finally (5) the right of labor to help itself through government recognition of collective bargaining. In an effort to restore the balance and to give labor a chance to take its rightful place in the economic life of the nation, the New Deal attempted to do something toward achieving each of these five major objectives.

The New Deal and Unemployment

To deal with the immediate problem of unemployment the Roosevelt administration chose the policy of made-work projects rather than the "dole." That is, it preferred to pay wages for various kinds of work rather than to dole out relief to idle unemployed. It felt that this policy would save the self-respect and preserve the morale of millions of workers and at the same time prime the pump of economic recovery by the expenditure of large amounts for needed projects. The program began in March, 1933, with legislation authorizing the establishment of the Citizens Civilian Conservation Corps.

One of the most serious effects of the depression was that it prevented so many young men from finding jobs and taking their rightful places as adult members of society. This growing delay in entering maturity had been an alarming development in the twentieth century. Now the C. C. C. accomplished a double purpose of providing useful work for such young men while conserving natural resources.

Farm Security Administration, photo by Rothstein

In the C. C. C. more than 300,000 such young men, housed in well-built camps, were set to work combatting forest fires, soil erosion like this, and plant pests; cutting trails and fire lanes; and planting trees on federal and state lands. This took care of many jobless boys just out of school, and was continued by later legislation until 1943.

In May the New Deal began in earnest to tackle the general unemployment problem, when congressional legislation created the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and authorized the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to make $500,000,000 available for emergency relief to the states. A month later under the National Industrial Recovery Act (discussed below) a Public Works Administration under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior was set up with $3,300,000,000 to promote construction in the public interest. With additional appropriations the PWA spent over $4,000,000,000 by the middle of 1941. To broaden the work of the PWA and care for the unemployed outside of the construction industry a Civil Works Administration (discontinued in 1934) was established in late 1933 with appropriations from the PWA and the FERA. Failure of the PWA adequately or quickly to handle the vast unemployment problem brought the creation of other unemployment and relief agencies, notably the Works Progress Administration in 1935.[1]

Charles Phelps Cushing

The WPA, like the PWA, appropriated money for public works such as this,—

NYA Photographic Workshop

—but it also provided money for educational and recreational, and other projects. Under the National Youth Administration, later attached to the WPA, it even furnished aid to high school and college students. When the WPA came to an end, it had spent approximately $10,500,000.

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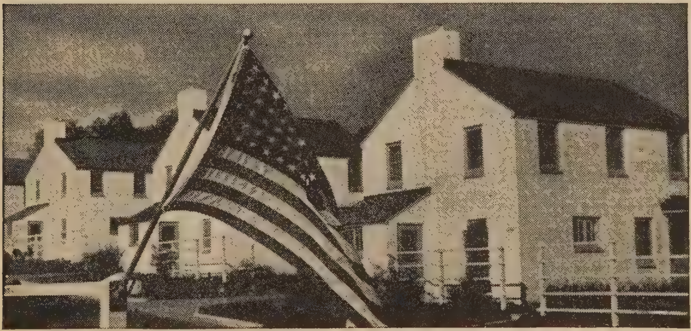
[1] In 1939 these relief agencies were consolidated under the Federal Works Agency.

Although large amounts of money were spent, these various relief agencies did not solve the unemployment problem. At the height of the program, early in 1936, the government was providing jobs for 3,800,000 people. The best it could do during most of the period was to reëmploy about one-third of the jobless, and this often at wages so low as to endanger the general level. After 1936, however, local "prevailing" wage rates were set.

The whole program of made-work projects was obviously a stopgap and it was discontinued when the great demand for labor during the Second World War made it unnecessary. It should be remembered, however, that the relief projects not only provided jobs for millions of men and women but they helped prime the pump of economic recovery and they accomplished much useful work. Thousands of miles of new roads and sewers were built, thousands of public buildings repaired, thousands of bridges built, and hundreds of school buildings, airports, parks, storage dams, and sewage treatment plants constructed, as well as innumerable other public projects carried on.[2] There was also a great cultural enrichment of the United States by a wide variety of educational arts' and writers' projects.



Farm Security Administration, photo by Vachon

Likewise a real start was made under the WPA on the problem of low-cost housing like this project at Greendale, Wisconsin, near Milwaukee, and slum clearance which seems likely to continue.

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[2] Among its achievements were 644,000 miles of roads, 77,000 bridges, 116,000 buildings, and 800 airports.

The NIRA

Perhaps the most important single piece of legislation during the first year of the Roosevelt administration was a two-year emergency measure known as the National Industrial Recovery Act (June, 1934). Although it made provision for immediate relief by providing for an extensive program of public works, it looked forward to more fundamental improvements in the condition of labor. The NIRA was essentially interested in encouraging industrial recovery. To do this it granted the President wide powers to promote self-regulation of industry under federal supervision, to curtail over-production, increase wages, shorten hours of work, and raise prices. To accomplish this the President was authorized to work out codes of fair competition, which industry was expected to accept voluntarily, but which might be forced upon it through a system of licensing. Four years of depression and bitter competition had driven wage levels far below a decent standard of living, and the price of commodities often below the cost of production. If industry temporarily could be freed from prosecution under the anti-trust laws, and if each branch of industry could formulate codes of fair competition including agreements concerning wages, prices, and sales methods, it was hoped that cut-throat competition might be softened and a general improvement in economic conditions result.[3]

To carry out this part of the program a National Recovery Administration was set up, which, with the aid of representatives of industry and labor, drew up codes for several hundred different industries. As a stopgap until the separate codes could be formulated, a blanket agreement, known as the President's Reëmployment Agreement, was promulgated in July. This blanket code banned child labor, established a work week of 35 hours for industrial workers and 40 for white collar workers, with minimum wages of 40 cents an hour for industry and from $12 to $15 per week for other labor, depending on the size of the community. Labor supported the NIRA enthusiastically because it believed that it would increase wages, reduce hours, eliminate some of the worst practices of industry, and make jobs. It also supported the act, as we shall see, because it guaranteed labor the right to organize. How far the NIRA actually promoted reëmployment, it is hard to say. One estimate believes that it may have put about a million and a half people back to work. There can be no doubt, however, that it tended to restore some hope to industry and to contribute toward recovery.

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[3] The NIRA also guaranteed to labor the right to organize and be represented in collective bargaining by persons of their own choosing. This will be discussed in the next section of the chapter.

Whatever its effect on employment, the NIRA and its administration was criticized from the start. There were frequent charges that the codes were evaded ("chiseling") and that the interests of the consumer were ignored in the code making. Labor also criticized the NIRA, insisting that those parts of the code applying to labor were evaded and that the government failed to enforce them. In the end there was a considerable opposition from industry, particularly the small manufacturer, who felt that the codes favored the larger units. Whatever the gains and losses through the organization of industry under the NIRA, the controversy ended when the Supreme Court ruled the act unconstitutional (May, 1935). The Court declared that the code-making provisions were an illegal transfer of the legislative power from Congress to the President. It also insisted that the attempt to regulate industry in this way was an improper use of the federal power over interstate commerce.

Other Helps to Labor

The establishment of made-work projects and the National Industrial Recovery Act were by no means the only efforts made by the Roosevelt administration to promote employment or to deal with hours and wages. In 1933 the National Employment Service Act created in the Department of Labor a bureau, the United States Employment Service, for the purpose of establishing a national employment system to coöperate with the states in setting up government employment agencies. A somewhat similar act had been vetoed two years earlier by Hoover. Such agencies had been taken for granted for many years in Europe, but it took a major depression in this country to bring them into existence here.

After the Supreme Court declared the NIRA unconstitutional, the Administration sought new legislation to accomplish some of the same things provided for in the earlier act. In 1936 Congress passed the Walsh-Healey Government Contracts Act which provided that public contracts (except for certain specified articles) in excess of $10,000 made by any federal agency must include stipulations that the manufacturer pay not less than the prevailing wages for persons employed in the industry. Moreover, the manufacturer must permit no person to work more than 8 hours in one day or 40 hours in any week and employ no male person under sixteen and no female under eighteen. The work, furthermore, must be performed under conditions not unduly hazardous.

The Walsh-Healey Act was a preliminary to a general wages and hours act, known as the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938). This legislation applied to all labor engaged in interstate commerce or production of goods for interstate commerce. Under it working hours were set at 44 per week for the first year, 42 for the second, and 40 thereafter. Minimum wages were to start at 25 cents per hour, and be increased to 40 cents over a period of seven years. With certain exceptions the minimum age of employment was set at sixteen years. Strongly opposed when first introduced, the act was finally pushed through by liberals and northern conservatives of both parties who believed that northern industry would be in a better position if southern competitors were forced to pay the same minimum wages. Although the minimum wages required under the act were still low, the provisions were generally recognized as a step in the right direction.

Child Labor Limitations

As a result of the depression, interest was revived in the Child Labor Amendment to the Constitution. After two federal child labor laws had been declared unconstitutional, Congress in 1924 submitted to the states an amendment giving Congress "power to limit, regulate and prohibit the labor of persons under 18 years of age." For almost a decade the proposed amendment received little attention. Suddenly, with the New Deal, interest was revived; by the end of 1942 some 28 states had ratified it. Whether or not the Child Labor Amendment is ever ratified, federal legislation has done much to accomplish the same objective. The NIRA tried to do this. Later child labor was banned by both the Walsh-Healey Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act. Since the child labor provision of the latter act was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1941, this iniquity which has disgraced American industry since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution may be largely ended.

ROOSEVELT AND ORGANIZED LABOR

Of all the contributions made by the New Deal to labor, the most important was the encouragement given to organization and collective bargaining. If there was to be any balance in our economic system, some sort of equality in bargaining power must be established between the employer and the wage earner. In an effort to promote such equality Section 7 (a) was written into the National Industrial Recovery Act. Briefly this section provided that employees shall have the "right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and shall be free from interference, or coercion of employers of labor, or their agents, in the designation of such representatives or in self-organization." No employee and no one seeking employment, said the Act, "shall be required as a condition of employment to join any union or to refrain from joining, organizing, or assisting a labor organization of his own choosing."

In theory labor already enjoyed the legal right to organize and bargain collectively. The significance of the NIRA was that for the first time the government promised protection if workers took advantage of the right. The mere passage of such an act gave encouragement to workers to join unions. Indeed, Section 7 (a) seemed like a new "charter of liberty" to labor and it is not surprising that almost a million new members joined the A. F. of L. during the two years' life of the NIRA. A real impetus was given to labor organizations by the mere belief that the President and his Administration favored it.

Although real gains were achieved by labor under the NIRA, the high hopes raised by the act were never realized. The immediate problem was enforcement of the labor provisions and of the codes, and this the federal government seemed unable to accomplish. National and local labor boards were set up to enforce the act, but they were soon swamped with complaints and proved inadequate. As the fact dawned upon labor that the NIRA was no short cut to a better day and that its enforcement was primarily their own responsibility, the number of strikes increased rapidly. The number of workers directly involved in strikes, which had sunk to 158,000 in 1930, increased to over a million in 1933 and considerably more in 1934. In the latter year the wave of labor unrest finally culminated in a nation-wide strike in the textile industry. It was not only failure of the government adequately to enforce the act, but also the refusal of business in many cases to obey the law that caused many of these strikes.

The National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act)

Fortunately for labor, the Supreme Court decision which ended the stormy career of the NIRA did not involve the labor provisions of the act. Shortly after the law was declared unconstitutional, Congress reënacted the labor provisions in the National Labor Relations Act (July, 1935). The new act sought to promote equality of bargaining powers between employers and employees and to diminish the causes of labor disputes. Specifically, it forbade employers (1) to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in their right to collective bargaining, (2) to refuse to bargain collectively, and (3) to dominate or interfere with the formation or administration of a labor organization or to interfere with membership in a labor union by discrimination with regard to hire or tenure. To enforce the act, a National Labor Relations Board was established. Unlike the NIRA, which was a temporary measure, the NLRA was passed as a permanent act. If enforced, it was bound to be extremely significant. It not only encouraged labor organization, but it made collective bargaining compulsory upon the employer, and by its wording seemed to doom the company union.

Although the National Labor Relations Act and other legislation gave encouragement and protection to organized labor, real progress in organization and improvement in the condition of labor depended on other factors. In the first place was the need of winning back middle-class sympathy and approval. This sympathy which had been largely lost in the 'twenties was regained in the 'thirties. The depression opened the eyes of the general public to the sufferings and handicaps endured by labor and to the need of greater protection. Nothing contributed to this change of feeling more than the activity of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, under the chairmanship of Robert M. La Follette, which received special instructions to investigate "violations of the rights of free speech and assembly and undue interference with the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively." As the Committee spread on the record the facts concerning the use of labor spies, strike-breakers, tear gas and deadly weapons, and the abridgement of the constitutional rights of free speech and assemblage in company-owned towns, the general public for the first time realized the difficulties under which labor worked in its efforts toward organization.

In the second place the NLRA could never be effective without a sincere desire on the part of the Administration to enforce the act. The desire unquestionably existed. The President appointed to the NLRB able and conscientious men, who performed an extremely difficult task and enforced the law as effectively as could be expected under the circumstances.[4] Nevertheless, both the act itself and the Board were denounced by employers as unfair and biased. Employers criticized the act on the ground that they could not themselves start proceedings before the Board and that they were forbidden even to talk with their own employees about labor organizations. Likewise the A. F. of L. attacked the NLRB as being biased in favor of industrial unionism and the C. I. O. The President, however, supported the Board and managed to checkmate Congress from passing legislation that would have destroyed its usefulness. That the Board itself worked effectively, and, on the whole successfully, may be seen from the fact that during its first five years it handled over 20,000 complaints. Of these, however, only 8 per cent ever reached the stage of formal hearings, reports, and orders. Of this number only 20 orders of the NLRB, contested in the courts by employers, reached the Supreme Court. That body upheld the Board in whole or in part in 18.

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[4] The first chairman of the Board was Joseph M. Madden, who was succeeded in 1940 by Professor Harry A. Millis of the University of Chicago.

In the third place, the National Labor Relations Act would be useless without the backing of the Supreme Court. This came on April 12, 1937, when that body upheld the constitutionality of the act in five cases. The problem presented in these cases was concerned generally with the question of whether certain industries, including steel and men's clothing, affected interstate commerce sufficiently to be covered by the act. The decisions gave to the law an almost universal coverage of the industries of the nation. With the exception of the Fansteel decision in 1939, which virtually outlawed sit-down strikes, the Court during the succeeding months not only approved by implication the constitutionality of the act, but time and again upheld the procedure and the decisions of the NLRB. In 1940 it protected the Board against the lower courts when by a unanimous decision it held that "the findings of the Board, as to fact, if supported by evidence, shall be . . . conclusive." Another notable victory was won when the Supreme Court in 1941 supported the Board's decision in the H. J. Heinz Company case when it ruled that a company must sign a written agreement with a union after both sides had arrived at an oral understanding.

Finally, the success of organized labor depended in the last analysis upon the ability of labor to help itself. On its part the government had passed laws to encourage and protect unions, and was showing a very definite disposition to enforce them. Could organized labor in the weakened condition in which it found itself in 1933 take advantage of its new opportunities? Labor made the effort and, all things considered, made rapid progress. Organizing machinery, grown almost rusty, was again put into operation.

Old organizers were again put in the field, and younger men who showed talent were put to work. In the years 1933 to 1936 the A. F. of L. regained and surpassed its membership peak of 4,000,000 in 1920. When the A. F. of L., as we have seen, failed to respond quickly to the challenge of organization in the mass industries, certain of the unions formed the Committee for Industrial Organization and did the job. By 1944 the combined membership of the A. F. of L., the C. I. O., and other labor organizations was over 13,000,000.

SOCIAL SECURITY

No program of labor legislation could be complete without some effort to protect the wage earner from the risks of industrial accidents, unemployment, and old age. In a highly industrial society where the masses of the people are wage earners and where the wages are generally too low to provide protection against the risks of industry, it is necessary for society to step in and provide that protection. This responsibility was long recognized in the older industrial nations of western Europe, but was accepted slowly in America. It was not until the first two decades of the present century that the nation gradually discarded the theory that industrial accidents are alone caused by negligence on the part of labor or management. In its place society accepted the principle that such accidents are the inevitable risks of industry and that their costs as far as possible should be met by industry and the general public. It was then that many of the states passed compulsory workmen's compensation laws to cover injuries sustained in industry.

It took even longer for the nation to realize that unemployment is also an inevitable part of an industrial civilization for which society must bear some responsibility. Men and women, capable, and anxious to work, are often thrown out of employment for reasons over which they have no control. Some trades are seasonal, others may be suddenly affected by a shift in consumer demands. Some manufacturing plants may curtail operations or close because of over production, mismanagement, or other reasons. In addition, there are the periodic depressions which swell the ranks of the unemployed. Even if a wage earner is able to escape the hardships of unemployment during most of his working life, he still must face the prospect of old age with little or no income. And in the speed-up of the new mass industries old age comes much sooner than in the earlier days of more deliberate production by skilled craftsmen.

Until the coming of the great depression, the nation gave little attention to either unemployment insurance or old-age pensions. In the *laissez-faire* atmosphere, which persisted so long, few people felt that the government had any great responsibility in these matters. The few who did were like voices crying in the wilderness. If unemployment, suffering, and starvation faced the worker, public and private charity were expected to deal with the problem. Many of the trade unions, of course, had their own sickness, accident, unemployment, and old-age benefits, but they covered less than one-tenth of the workers, and in any event were inadequate to meet the situation.

Unemployment Insurance

Two or three years of depression, however, changed the general attitude. Up to 1934, for example, only one state, Wisconsin, had passed an Unemployment Insurance Act, but by the end of 1937 all 48 states, with Alaska, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia, had some kind of unemployment insurance. This change had come largely through the influence of the Social Security Act of 1935 which sought to promote such insurance by providing for a federal-state system of unemployment compensation through laws passed by the states. The system was to be largely financed by a payroll tax on employers collected by the federal government and repaid to those states having unemployment insurance acts approved by the Social Security Board.

It will be seen that the Social Security Act itself did not provide unemployment insurance. It simply collected a tax from employers for the general purposes of the federal government and then turned back to those states having approved unemployment insurance laws the amount necessary to carry out the law. Employers paying taxes to support their own state law might be credited up to 90 per cent for these payments against their federal tax. All employers were liable for the tax who employed eight or more workers at least one day in each of 20 different weeks during the taxable year, but the act did not include agricultural labor, domestic service, employees of federal, state, and local governments, or certain other classes of labor.

Although the state laws had to be approved by the federal government, they varied greatly in detail and in their usefulness to the unemployed. Some states required only a two weeks' waiting period between the time a worker lost his job and the time he received unemployment compensation; others required up to eight weeks. The states varied greatly in the amount of compensation paid per week and the number of weeks in which compensation would be paid. Moreover, there were so many exemptions that not more than half of the wage earners in 1942 were covered by the law. As a whole these laws were grossly inadequate to meet the situation. Not only were millions of workers excluded from the benefits by the federal law, but compensation in the states was by no means adequate to meet any serious unemployment crisis extending over a long period. The act, however, was a start in the right direction and it did encourage all of the states to adopt some sort of plan.

Despite the inadequacy of these state laws they do provide, at least for a few weeks, an income for many workers who have lost their jobs. They help to tide over many unemployed until they can find new work. Unemployment insurance is also of great help to workers in seasonal occupations, such as carpenters, painters, bricklayers, and plumbers. Many of these men are busily employed during the building season in the summer, but may be without work for many weeks during the winter. Unemployment insurance helps them to get through the slack season. It is a definite step forward in the crusade against want and fear.

Old-Age Pensions

More rapid progress was made in the years before the passing of the Social Security Act with old-age pensions than with unemployment insurance. By 1934 at least 29 states had some type of old-age pension laws, of which ten were passed in 1933 and two (Pennsylvania and Iowa) in 1934. In addition there were many private employers who had introduced the scheme. It was the Social Security Act of 1935, as revised in 1939, that made the pension scheme nation-wide and put its administration largely in the hands of the federal government. The act provided for two plans of old-age security—an old-age pension plan and an old-age annuity insurance system. The first was to take care of aged needy persons over sixty-five years of age by federal grants on a fifty-fifty matching basis with the states, except that the federal government's share in no case would exceed $20 a month.

More important than this was the scheme which provided for a contributory old-age pension system to be paid for by an income tax on employees and a payroll tax on employers beginning with 1 per cent in 1937 and rising gradually until 1949 when the contribution from both would be 3 per cent. The monthly pension was expected to range from $10 to $85 depending on wages earned between January, 1937, and the date when the worker became sixty-five. In addition the law provided for lump sum payments to persons of sixty-five and payments upon death.

Like the unemployment insurance feature of the Social Security Act, the pension scheme has been criticized because many groups of workers are not included. Agricultural labor, domestic servants, government employees, casual labor, and workers employed by corporations or institutions operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes were not covered by the scheme. Nevertheless, the coverage was wide. Up to March, 1944, the government had established wage record accounts for approximately 76,000,000 persons. The scheme has also been criticized on the fundamental grounds that it is not really "social insurance." In reality it is a pension scheme much like that provided by private insurance companies in which those who need it the most get the least. That is, the man who has earned high wages throughout his life will get a larger pension than the man who has earned the least. The difference here is that it is compulsory and run by the government rather than by the private companies. A sound old-age "social insurance" plan, it is argued, would not only be run by the government, but be based on the need of the pensioner rather than his ability to pay insurance premiums.

Other Security Legislation

Important as was the Social Security Act in promoting old-age insurance for workers, it was not the only step taken by the federal government in the direction of old-age security. For years many of the railroads had provided some form of pensions for aged retired workmen. In the interest of making these more liberal and of unifying the whole system, the federal government proposed to take over the administration of the railroad pensions. After one plan had been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, the federal government and the railroads came to an agreement in 1937 whereby the government took over the various pension schemes already in use by the railroads and assumed responsibility for administering a general railroad pension plan. An act to make this possible was passed by Congress. Funds were to come from contributions by both management and workers which would provide pensions having a maximum of $120 a month.

In addition to the old-age pension and the unemployment insurance features, the Social Security Act carried appropriations to take care of needy dependent children; appropriations for the promotion of the health of mothers and children in areas suffering severe economic distress; appropriations for medical, surgical, and corrective services for crippled children; for homeless and neglected children; for the vocational re-building of the physically disabled and aid for the needy blind, and finally, for adequate public health services. This type of work was to be done by the states through grants from the federal government.

The British Beveridge Plan

It is obvious from this discussion of the Social Security Act that a new social philosophy was taking hold of the minds of many people—a belief that society owes security to all those who do their job and are willing to put aside something for a rainy day. This belief was greatly strengthened during the Second World War. How strong it had become was demonstrated by the reception given to a plan prepared by a group of British civil servants headed by Sir William Beveridge. The Beveridge plan provides that virtually everyone (except children and the very old), both men and women, including housewives gainfully employed, shall take out insurance to cover unemployment, disability, old age, the special costs of bearing and rearing children, and the extra costs occasioned by death. Both employers and employees contribute, and one tax covers all benefits. The national government would administer the scheme. The plan provided that everyone should be protected to some degree against the unusual expenses and misfortunes of life by either social insurance or public assistance. Although widely supported, the Beveridge plan was side-tracked by Parliament because of immediate war problems. It is quite possible, however, that either the Beveridge Plan or some similar scheme will be seriously reconsidered by Great Britain after the war.

American Planning

A little over three months later (March 10, 1943) a somewhat similar plan was drawn up in America by the National Resources Planning Board and sent to Congress by President Roosevelt. The NRPB was an agency set up by the President in 1935 which had operated under various names since that date. Its business was to present information and suggest plans for the development and use of national resources. With the advent of the Second World War it concerned itself chiefly with post-war planning. Like the Beveridge Plan, the NRPB Plan provided through social insurance for unemployment, disability, old age, and death of the breadwinner. Unlike the Beveridge Plan it did not provide maternity and funeral benefits, but it did propose a federal works program to aid the unemployed and another program to aid youth. The NRPB Plan was received with interest by many in this country but by no means with the enthusiasm that the Beveridge Plan aroused in England. Congress not only side-tracked bills offered to make the plan possible, but went so far as to discontinue the National Resources Planning Board. Despite the failure of Parliament to act on the Beveridge Plan immediately and the lack of Congressional interest in this country on the proposals of the NRPB, both plans undoubtedly pointed to the future.

Summary

The discussion in this chapter of the New Deal legislation affecting labor by no means exhausts the subject. Much could be said, for example, of the significance of the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937 which established a United States Housing Authority with power to make loans and contributions for slum clearance and the building of low-rent houses. Of the vast amount of important legislation passed during the years 1933–1938 there were few acts which did not directly or indirectly concern labor. Enough has been said, however, to make clear that the New Deal administration was in earnest in its efforts to improve the legal position of labor, to encourage labor organization, to establish minimum wage levels and maximum working hours, and to provide some security against unemployment and for old age. Many of these laws were inadequate and clearly only a beginning. But they did point the way to a brighter future for the wage earner. What that future will be, however, depends as much on the policies and skill of labor leadership and upon the intelligence of the rank and file as on any government laws.

As we examine the history of labor during the past few years, certain facts become clear. First of all, the legal position and the rights of labor have been strengthened, a situation which has led to great increases in the membership of organized labor and to a stronger position and greater power in our national life. In the second place, it is clear that the attitude and ideals of labor have changed. No longer is it content with the old slogan, "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work" and the right to work out its own destiny on the purely economic front without coöperation or aid from the government. Its long crusade against want and its fight for freedom to be free has finally led to a wider ideal of its place in the America of the future. Labor insists that it is more than a commodity which can be bought and sold on the market. Workers are human beings who have a right to an opportunity to work, freedom from want, and equality before the law.

Nowhere has labor's hope for the future been better expressed than in a New Bill of Rights issued by the National Resources Planning Board with its Report:

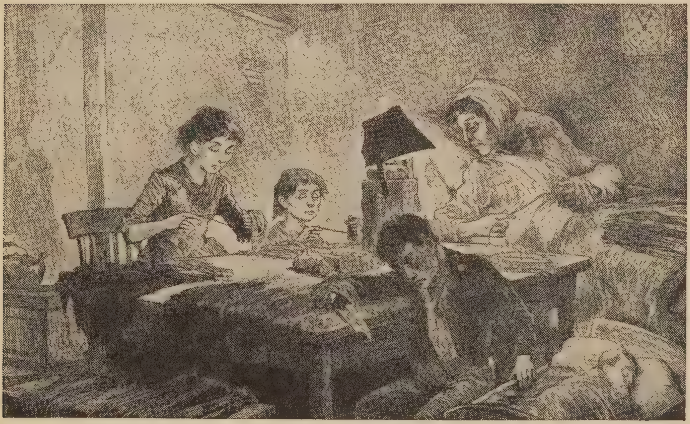
1. The right to work usefully and creatively through the productive years.
2. The right to fair play, adequate to command the necessities and amenities of life in exchange for work, ideas, thrift, and other socially valuable services.
3. The right to adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical care.
4. The right to security, with freedom from fear of old age, want, dependency, sickness, unemployment, and accident.
5. The right to live in a system of free enterprise, free from compulsory labor, irresponsible private power, arbitrary public authority, and unregulated monopolies.
6. The right to come and go, to speak or to be silent, free from the spyings of secret political police.
7. The right of equality before the law, with equal access to justice in fact.
8. The right to education, for work, for citizenship, and for personal growth and happiness.
9. The right to rest, recreation, and adventure, the opportunity to enjoy and take part in an advancing civilization.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Throughout this book, references are made to decreases in the length of the working day and the work-week. Prepare a time-line or bar graph showing the story of this decrease with actual or approximate dates. Supplement this book with other references if necessary.
2. Make a balance sheet of the New Deal's actions affecting labor. Use three columns, and in one put those actions which in your opinion have been accepted by the majority of the people, both Democrats and Republicans, in both principle and machinery, e.g., principle—federal government's obligation to youth; machinery—Civilian Conservation Corps. In the middle column, put those actions where the principle

has been accepted but the machinery is open to considerable criticism (e.g., the W. P. A.). In the third column put those acts concerning which there is controversy over both principle and machinery.

3. Account for the shift in the attitude of the Supreme Court toward labor.
4. List the arguments, pro and con, from labor's point of view, on the protective tariff.
5. At the present time, 28 states have ratified the child labor amendment to the Constitution. What are the arguments favoring the passage of that amendment, and what arguments have prevented its ratification by the other 20 states.
6. One writer has said that governmental regulation usually comes about because of abuses which government must correct. See if this is illustrated by the National Labor Relations Act.



7. Study the above picture carefully and write a short essay on it, discussing conditions and hours of work, health conditions and possible exaggerations in the picture. (*Culver Service*)

CHAPTER X

The Structure and Function of Unions

THE STORY OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES as narrated in the previous chapters is long and full of ups and downs. Many unsuccessful attempts were made before permanency was attained. The historical record shows that workers have been driven on occasions into strikes, personal violence, and destruction of property. If employers boycotted union members seeking employment and fired workers for belonging to trade unions, then when the workers did succeed in organizing, they forced the employers to fire non-unionists. The unions suffered from legal prosecution and later were treated as "trusts" seeking to gain a monopoly control over the price of their commodity, labor-power. Their status remained uncertain until the Wagner Act (1935) made collective bargaining definitely legal and outlawed the company unions which had been built extensively by strong corporations as a backfire against genuine unionism. Even then, that act was challenged until the Supreme Court confirmed its legality. More recently the National Labor Relations Board, set up by the Wagner Act, from time to time has had to order company unions to cease operation.

In this chapter we examine the unions of today as they have become a recognized part of our industrial life. What are the kinds of unions? How are they organized? What are their problems? How are they financed? What services do they provide to members?

KINDS OF UNIONS

The terms *craft*, *trade*, and *industrial* as applied to unions have been used throughout this book and it is well to get a clear idea of these different types of organizations as found in the United States. A *craft* union with its locals is made up of workers who perform the same operation and use the same tools. For example, the Bricklayers' Union is made up of bricklayers only. In some unions there are locals of different crafts. For example, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union has locals of cutters, pressers, operators, etc.

In contrast to the craft union which divides the workers according to their particular jobs, skills, and tools, there is the *industrial* union. Here all the workers necessary to the production of a given commodity or service or to the operation of a given industry are grouped together irrespective of the work they do. For example, no matter what the job of a worker is at Ford's auto plant, the United Automobile Workers acts for him[1] The United Mine Workers of America includes the men who hew the coal, who load the coal into mine cars, who drive the horses or operate the engines used in the mine, who timber the roads, and who perform all the other activities necessary to the production of coal. Chapter VII told of the revolutionary industrial unionism advocated by the Wobblies (I. W. W.) in the early years of our century. The industrial unions of the C. I. O. while promoting organization by industry do not share the revolutionary aims of the I. W. W. As the name implied, the I. W. W. believed the workers in each industry should unite only as a preliminary to uniting the workers of all industries and in all countries as a class to use their united industrial power to overthrow the "capitalist system."

[1] With the growth of aviation and the conversion of auto plants to airplane production, the United Automobile Workers altered its name to United Automobile, Aircraft, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW–CIO).

Another kind of union includes men grouped according to the *material* in which they work. For example, the Carpenters' Union insists that any person who uses wood or who works in wood should belong to it. There is the Sheet Metal Workers union organized on the same basis. Still other unions are organized according to *trade*, using that word in a narrow sense. For example, the United Radio and Electrical Workers of America takes in all the people who are engaged in production and distribution of electrical appliances, although they would not, in some cases, include the clerical workers in the offices of the big companies. Sometimes the nearness of one factory to another will influence workers to join a union which does not nominally cover their particular trade. The term "amalgamated" in union titles indicates that various trades and crafts have been brought together into one organization. And the long complicated titles of some unions represent growth by accretion of kindred trades and crafts.

There is thus no uniform pattern for the unions which now function in the United States. They differ in their growth, their structure and their activity. There are three main groups—the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, and the Railroad Brotherhoods, the history of which has been given in previous chapters. Altogether, with some small independent unions, they included in 1944 an unprecedented total of over 13 million workers. How recent is this growth is shown by Philip Taft in *How Collective Bargaining Works*:

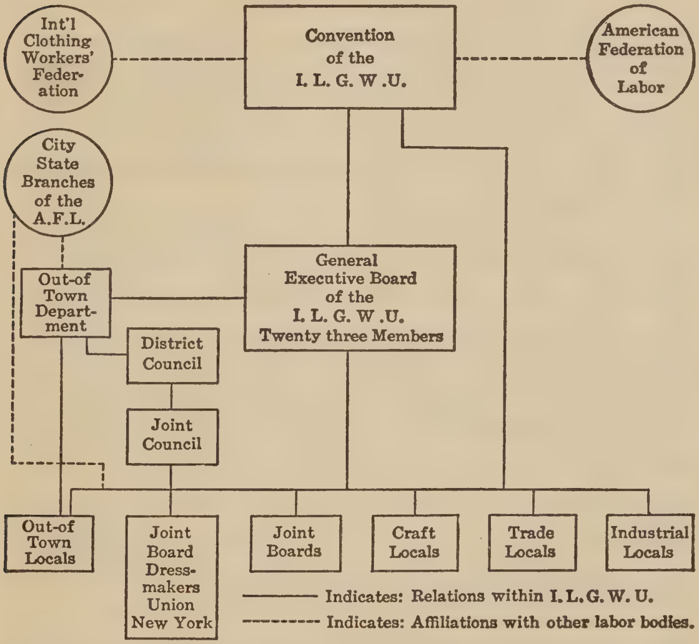
> Between 1933 and 1938 total trade-union membership rose from an annual average of slightly less than 3 million to about 8 million. With business revival in 1939, following the recession of 1937–1938, it continued to expand. By early 1940, between 8.5 and 9 million workers in the United States and Canada were attached to the A. F. of L., the C. I. O. or unaffiliated "outside" unions. The following year total membership approached 11 million.

COMPOSITION OF LABOR MOVEMENT

The A. F. of L.

The oldest and most firmly established union group is the American Federation of Labor whose origin was described in an earlier chapter. In 1941 the A. F. of L. paid-up membership reported to the yearly convention was 4,569,056. This increased to 5,482,581 in 1942 and to 5,939,021 by October, 1943. The officials of the Federation estimate an additional floating membership of half a million. These recent gains were mostly in the war industries.

DIAGRAM OF STRUCTURE AND AFFILIATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LADIES' GARMENT WORKERS' UNION


Int'l Clothing Workers' Federation
Convention of the I. L. G. W .U.
American Federation of Labor
City State Branches of the A.F.L.
Out-of Town Department
General Executive Board of the I. L. G. W .U. Twenty three Members
District Council
Joint Council
Out-of Town Locals
Joint Board Dress-makers Union New York
Joint Boards
Craft Locals
Trade Locals
Industrial Locals
Indicates: Relations within I. L. G. W. U.
Indicates: Affiliations with other labor bodies.

The A. F. of L. for many years was largely composed of unions in the printing, metal, and building trades in which the workers were organized according to their different craft skills. Examples are the compositors, photo-engravers, pressmen, boilermakers, machinists, molders, bricklayers, masons, electricians, etc. However, there has been no strictly uniform pattern adopted by the A. F. of L.'s constituent unions. For example, the United Mine Workers was always organized on an industrial basis, which meant that it took in all the various workers engaged in producing coal. In the women's garment industry, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union has a mixed composition of craft, trade, and industrial locals, but it secures the advantage of industrial organization through the medium of joint boards to which the locals in each city must belong. The appendix will give you the list of unions now composing the A. F. of L. and the other general groups, and their names indicate the variety of forms.

As the previous chapters have shown, the A. F. of L. has consistently advocated the extension of educational facilities for all the people of the United States. It has been criticised as conservative by many people, but from time to time its opinions have changed. For example, there was a time, under the leadership of Samuel Gompers, when the A. F. of L. officially expressed a great distrust for governmental control. There was, it is true, never complete unity or consistency in this attitude. The A. F. of L. supported early legislation to make Saturday afternoon a holiday, and yet in 1914, giving evidence before the U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations, Mr. Gompers declared:

> The A. F. of L. encourages the practice of its various affiliated organizations in endeavoring to secure a shorter workday by means of collective agreements with employers in the various industries, but it opposes reaching the same result by means of a law binding upon all employers in a given state, or throughout the union. If there were a movement and a possibility of establishing an eight-hour workday and a minimum wage by legal enactment throughout the land, the Federation would op-

> pose such policies, because it has in a large measure accomplished the same purposes and will accomplish them by the initiative of the associations or the organizations and by the grit and courage of the manhood and womanhood of the men and women of the A. F. of L.

Earlier in the same testimony, reprinted in 1941 in the A. F. of L. pamphlet "The American Labor Movement," Mr. Gompers thus explained his position on a legal minimum wage:

> In my judgment the proposal to establish by law a minimum wage for women, though well meant, is a curb upon the rights, the natural development, and the opportunity for development of the women employed in the industries of our country. If the legislature should once fix a minimum wage it would have the opportunity to use the machinery of the state to enforce work at that rate whether the workers desired to render services or not. I am very suspicious of the activities of governmental agencies. I apprehend that once the state is allowed to fix a minimum rate, the state would also take the right to compel men or women to work at that rate. I have some apprehension that if the legislature were allowed to establish a maximum workday it might also compel workmen to work up to the maximum allowed.

The A. F. of L. also believed that the workers should earn high enough wages so that they could protect themselves in time of unemployment and hence opposed unemployment insurance. That attitude is now altered, and the A. F. of L. has taken an active part in securing laws to regulate wages and hours and to obtain social security. The A. F. of L. has also played a leading role in developing vocational education so that the industry could be assured of an adequate supply of trained workers. Many of the criticisms leveled at the A. F. of L. arise from the fact that it is only a federation, a form of organization which allows a great deal of self-government to its constituent unions. In practice this has meant that the A. F. of L. Executive Council does not take vigorous steps to compel certain unions which belong to it to drop their discrimination against Negroes or to expel unions which have suffered from racketeering leaders. (A parallel may be noted in the federal government, which is not able to exercise certain controls over the states.)

While most of the unions in the A. F. of L. are craft unions or confined to various trades, experience has forced the unions in related crafts and trades to unite. For example, 19 unions in the building industry are linked together in the Building Trades Department which has its own officers and annual meeting. In the large city this Department will have its own Building Trades Council in which the representatives of the carpenters, the bricklayers, the plumbers, and so forth will meet regularly to discuss trade conditions. The various unions will plan joint action in organizing the building industry and controlling wages and hours.

Sixteen unions form a similar Metal Trades Department and the nine unions in the railroad shops have a Railway Employees Department. Some 40 international unions which use the union label to identify goods made under union conditions have formed the Union Label Trades Department and this too exists on the local level as affiliates to the city central labor unions. Usually lists of union label goods are distributed to the union delegates and the public to guide them in their purchases. A specialized effort is made by the printing trade unions in each city. All the craft unions in printing (the typesetter, engraver, pressman, and others) set up the Allied Printing Trades Council in each city to use a joint label.

The United States Department of Labor has described in its *Handbook of American Trade Unions* (Bulletin #618) the work and composition of these departments. These departments have not always been successful in keeping their constituent craft unions united, although their existence shows the need for grouping together unions in allied trades and industries. Advocates of organization of labor by industries have insisted that departments are a poor substitute for industrial unions, about whose formation we shall read later.

In an over-all official survey the A. F. of L. reported to its 1943 Convention that 100 international unions, 50 state branches, 758 city central labor unions, and 3301 directly affiliated local trade and federal labor unions were affiliated with it. The international unions are the strongest sections and on the basis of per capita paid in 1943 the Teamsters and Truckdrivers lead with 602,900 members, followed closely by the Carpenters with 600,000, and the Hodcarriers and Laborers with 420,200. At each Convention the A. F. of L. reports its membership and presents its balance sheet showing to the public any changes that have taken place.

The C. I. O.

The Congress of Industrial Organizations grew up because some of the unions in the A. F. of L. felt that the Federation was not taking full advantage of the favorable situation presented for union organization by the New Deal. These dissenting unions, which formed what was at first called the Committee for Industrial Organization, maintained that the craft form of unionism could not organize the mass production industries in which the skill of the individual worker has been considerably reduced, and in which the majority of the workers carry through repetition jobs which can be easily learned.

In the beginning the C. I. O. hoped to be a propaganda committee working inside the A. F. of L. but that became impossible when the A. F. of L. suspended the unions because they would not drop their association with the committee. The C. I. O. by its organization campaigns in the favorable atmosphere of the New Deal increased tremendously the ranks of the labor movement in the United States and made notable advances in the automobile industry, in steel, and in rubber. In 1943 there were 40 international unions, national unions, and "organizing committees," and 368 local industrial unions affiliated with the C. I. O. Two hundred seventy-five industrial union councils (city and state) were also affiliated. The C. I. O. claimed a membership in 1943 of 5,285,000 of which, it is estimated, 1,000,000 are women and 500,000 are Negroes.

One of the great problems lately facing the labor movement is to secure unity between the C. I. O. and the A. F. of L. This is complicated by the position of the individual who did most to start the C. I. O., John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America. He broke with President Roosevelt because the President did not support the union's effort to organize "Little Steel," and supported Wendell Willkie in the election of 1940. He declared that if the C. I. O. members did not follow his advice in the election, he would take it as a vote of no-confidence and resign as head of the C. I. O. He fulfilled his pledge. Later on difficulties arose between the miners and the other C. I. O. unions and finally, in its convention of October, 1942, the United Mine Workers of America withdrew from the C. I. O. In May, 1943, the United Mine Workers applied for re-admission into the A. F. of L. and the 1943 A. F. of L. Convention empowered its Executive Council to work out conditions for readmission. Arrangements for joining the A. F. of L. were not completed, and the petition for reaffiliation was withdrawn in 1944.

The rivalry existing between the C. I. O. and the A. F. of L. plays into the hands of those people who short-sightedly wish to destroy all unions. It also leads to wasteful rivalry in the elections run by the National Labor Relations Board. There is a strong sentiment for unity among the members of both groups. During wartime the C. I. O., the

A. F. of L. and the railroad brotherhoods worked together. They united to give a no-strike pledge which was largely kept until severe cuts in the real wages of the miners and the railroad workers forced them to secure higher wage rates in their new agreements. They united to ask for a roll-back of prices to fix them in a fair relation to the frozen wage standards. Both the A. F. of L. and C. I. O. campaigned against the Smith-Connally Act (June, 1943). So there often is united action between the two groups.

Both the C. I. O. and A. F. of L. have regional, district, state, and city sub-divisions. The A. F. of L. has state federations and city central labor unions. The C. I. O. has its state and city industrial councils. The locals of the international unions usually affiliate with the city and state units. (See diagram on A. F. of L. in Chapter VI, page 111.) Such regional bodies watch the legislatures and unite the unions for joint action in the states and cities. There are also federal unions in the A. F. of L. as distinct from the international. These are formed in a plant by workers who are not eligible to join or have not been claimed by an A. F. of L. international union as being within its jurisdiction.

Other Union Groups

The unions of railway engineers, firemen, conductors, and trainmen (usually referred to as the operating staff in comparison with those who make and repair the equipment), with a 1943 membership of 425,000, have remained outside the A. F. of L., although they have a working relationship with railway unions inside the A. F. of L. Government regulation was introduced for the railroads before it was applied elsewhere and the railroad unions thus early needed representatives in the Congress lobby to influence and initiate legislation. Centralized control and nation-wide agreements also differentiated them from other unions in the early days. Thus most of the operating unions did not become part of the A. F. of L. The Railway Clerks, Carmen and Pullman Porters are, however, affiliates of the A. F. of L. The Red Caps' Union (now officially called the United Transport Service Employees) is in the C. I. O.

Some unions such as the Brewery Workers, the Typographical Union and the Machinists have left the A. F. of L. at various times because of individual disagreement with its rules and policies. Some smaller independent unions, some of which had previously been company unions, have also remained apart and at the present writing, a group of these independent unions, claiming to include 35 unions with about 300,000 members, has been setting up a federation of its own.

This picture shows a confusion which is more apparent than real. The United States is such a large country that there is room for many unions which have by custom established their own jurisdiction. In practice that jurisdiction is not challenged by other groups.

The variety to be found in the American continent also appears in the structure and strength of American labor. While there is a general trend toward collective bargaining and industry-wide contracts, there are industries in which unions are only newly established or not at all. The mines and railroads and garment shops have been long unionized but unions in the automobile, steel, rubber, and glass industries were only successfully established in the days of the C. I. O. and the New Deal. There are still weak spots among the textile and chemical industries. Unions are not strong among the 6½ million wholesale and retail employees, among the 4 million in the financial and service trades, the 3 million agricultural workers and the 4 million government employees. White collar workers, pinched by wartime increases in the cost of living, were thus stimulated to join unions covering office and professional workers. Technicians, architects, teachers and even foremen are among recent recruits to trade unionism.

PROBLEMS IN LABOR ORGANIZATION

Women in Trade Unions

The relatively small proportion of women organized in unions indicate that there are differences and difficulties which have yet to be overcome. Nearly 12,000,000 are classified as "homemakers" and hence in normal times only have contact with labor unions through the male members of their families, if at all. It is estimated that 2¾ million of these women (those under forty-five years of age and with no children under sixteen) became part of the wartime labor force of 1943. By the close of 1942 the number of women at work had reached 15 million, which was 273 per thousand workers employed compared with 230 in 1940. Of these 15 million, over 3 million are estimated to be trade union members compared to an estimate of 245,000 in 1940. The C. I. O. estimates that it has at least one million women members. Such unions as the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers have opened their doors to women. The United Steel Workers say that women are only 1 to 2 per cent of their membership but they expect an increase to 15 per cent.

During the war women have been working in aircraft, ammunition, instrument, cannon and firearm, shipbuilding, machine tool, chemical, and other war industries. They have been driving trucks, busses and street cars, delivering jeeps, and ferrying planes for the Army. This is additional to increased employment in jobs that are normally "women's work" in textile mills, garment factories, auto plants, shops, and offices.

The fear, based on experience, that the employment of women presents a threat of cheap labor to hard-won standards was removed by the decisions of the National War Labor Board that women's wage rates should be equal to men's for equal work.

In some branches of the women's garment industry, women constitute 95 per cent of the personnel and the overall percentage is as high as 75. With the growth of women membership there is an increase in women union officials and organizers. The older unions of the A. F. of L. looked upon women workers as dubious recruits for union membership because in many cases their stay in industry was short or they worked for "pin money." The Women's Trade Union League has for many years worked to overcome handicaps in organizing women and has succeeded in organizing ill-paid trades in which women predominate, such as catering, hotel, laundry, beauticians, and other service trades. It has tried, in conjunction with other progressive women's organizations, to organize domestic servants and set up standards of employment. The W. T. U. L. has also been at pains to train and educate women for activity in the union movement.[2]

The influx of women will influence the unions in many ways. The *Handbook of Trade Union Methods* (ILGWU) insists on appropriate changes in union headquarters:

> "I just hate to go to that old union hall" is a not uncommon remark among women workers. Take a look at the hall, and you'll understand. The Labor Temple, once the pride and joy of the unionists who built it, is in a neighborhood now run down; it is off on a side street, flanked by a saloon and a bowling alley. The hall lies up three flights of dirty stairs and the girls and women must run the gamut of the loafers who hang around the building. The color scheme of the room is cobweb gray and coaldust black. The chief *objets d'art* are a flyspecked charter draped with a scrap of rusty crape, and seven large cuspidors last cleaned when Cleveland was president. The place smells of dead tobacco smoke and stale beer,

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[2] See *The Women's Trade Union League in Great Britain and the United States* by Gladys Boone (Columbia University Press, 1942). Miss Mary Anderson, secretary of the Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, gives further details of the changing attitude of the unions. (*New York Times Magazine*, July 19, 1943, in an article, "Sixteen Million at Work.")

and as for the condition of the only toilet—well, the less said the better. The shirtsleeved men playing checkers at the back stop midway through a juicy story about the perennial traveling man and the farmer's daughter to glower at "these damn skirts" who venture to invade the sacred halls of masculinity. Do you blame the girls for not wanting to go there?

Contrast this with the union headquarters which the ILGWU and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers maintain jointly at Fall River, Mass. The offices, on the main street of the town, have cretonne curtains at the windows and bright linoleum rugs on the floor. The social hall adjoining has comfortable wicker chairs, bookshelves for a circulating library of interesting books, a victrola that can provide dance music, a sink and hotplate and dishes for impromptu "spreads" and—wonder of wonders—a mirror where complexion and croquinole curls can be put in order. Silly? Maybe so, but the girls do come! They have a particular pride in the place, too, because they helped to fix it up.

This emphasis on surroundings does not mean that the male workers should be forced to submit to an atmosphere of rose-tinted femininity; only that some concessions from the he-man influence in the average union headquarters are necessary if women are to be welcome and useful in the union.

The pre-war influence of women upon union premises now finds its wartime parallel in the improvements necessitated by the influx of women into war industries—cleaner shops and restrooms and also better cafeteria food and service.

So far women do not hold any position in the Executive Council of either the A. F. of L. or the C. I. O. but there are increasing numbers of women who are on the executive councils and governing boards of their unions and who serve as business agents, union managers, and organizers. Some women (see Elizabeth Hawes' *Why Women Cry*) insist that a large number of women will remain in industry and take a much larger share in running the trade unions.

Negroes

In the past, Negro workers have been considered poor union material because they were largely employed at unskilled and low-paid work—the field in which craft unionism was weakest. Also, they had been used as strike breakers, as in meat packing. Some unions, particularly railway unions with a membership in the South, frankly excluded them on racial grounds.[3] Of late, the situation has improved, both in admission of Negroes into unions and in up-grading them in the workshop.

The C. I. O. estimates that it has half a million Negroes and a conservative current estimate puts Negro members in the A. F. of L. at 75,000 to 100,000. Among the A. F. of L. unions the ILGWU has about 10,000 and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters has 9,000 Negro members. A.

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[3] "Unions which exclude Negroes entirely, by provisions in their rituals or constitutions: the International Association of Machinists; Switchmen's Union of North America; National Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots; Airline Pilots Association; American Wire Weavers Protective Association; Railway Mail Association; Commercial Telegraphers Union; Order of Railway Telegraphers; Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen; Order of Railway Conductors; Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen; American Federation of Railroad Workers; American Association of Train Dispatchers; Railroad Yard Masters of North America; and Railroad Yard Masters of America.

"Unions which tacitly exclude Negroes: the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; United Association of Journeymen Plumbers and Steamfitters; American Flint Glass Workers Union; Asbestos Workers, Heat, and Frost Insulators; Granite Cutters International Association.

"Unions which afford Negroes only segregated Jim Crow auxiliary status (i.e., separate locals with second rate status): the Brotherhood of Railroad Carmen of America; Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, and Station Employees; Brotherhood of Blacksmiths, Drop Forgers and Helpers; Brotherhood of Boiler Makers, Iron Ship Builders, Welders and Helpers of America; Sheet Metal Workers International Association; Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees; National Federation of Rural Letter Carriers; and National Rural Letter Carriers' Association."—(*Brother Jim Crow* by James Rorty, 1943.) See also "Organized Labor and Negro Workers" by Herbert R. Northrup, in the *Journal of Political Economy*, June, 1943, and "Organized Labor and the Negro" (*Harpers*, 1944) by the same author.

Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, has endeavored at each A. F. of L. Convention to obtain action against its unions which exclude Negroes from full membership. In the C. I. O. the United Auto Workers has been at great pains to organize the Negro workers and where necessary to compel its locals to stop any discrimination. The Packing-House Workers' Organizing Committee says that 45 per cent of the workers engaged in the slaughtering industry are colored, of whom 60 per cent are male. The C. I. O. now has a Negro on its executive board in the person of Willard S. Townsend, president of United Transport Service Employees. While the United Mine Workers has no breakdown of its membership by race or color, it estimates that in Alabama Negroes make up about 60 per cent of its members.

The W. L. B. ruled out differences in rates of pay on account of race and color. And the Roosevelt administration set up the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to enforce equal treatment in hiring Negro and other racial groups.

Nationality and Religion

No accurate breakdown of union membership according to nationality and religion can be made. In any area where the Irish are prominent in political administration as, say, in New York City and Boston, they will also be found among the union leaders. The names of the delegates to any union convention indicate the same international origins as would any list of American citizens. The Catholic trade unionists are organized in some cities in the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists for educational work and as a pressure group in unions. However, attempts to divide the unions on lines of race and religion are frowned upon as likely to create divisions in the union ranks. Union conventions endeavor to have representatives of the main religions give the invocation on various days. The general relationship between organized religion and labor has improved in recent years and ministers of various denominations have actively assisted the organization and operation of unions.

Jurisdictional Disputes

A long-standing and internal problem for the unions has been the disputes which arise between unions as to which has the right to do certain jobs. When such arguments lead to stoppages or when one union pickets against another, members of the general public are penalized and employers see their work delayed and their contract imperiled. As a result the unions get a black eye in public opinion. Because of this labor has been active in creating agencies to avoid such disputes. However, some still occur and it is well to understand them.

Each union in its charter receives jurisdiction over certain kinds of work to be done by its members. This jurisdiction is guarded just as jealously as a nation watches its frontiers and its sovereignty over a given territory. Jobs mean members and members mean dues and dues mean life for the union and power for its leaders. When jobs are scarce, then the struggle for them is increased. When a new process destroys old jobs, the union tries to control the new process. For example, carpenters once made doors on the building site. Now doors are made by machinery in a factory, and so the carpenters try to organize the factory machinist woodworker. Sometimes, fearing to lose jobs for their members, unions will insist on handwork and outmoded processes. There are many difficult questions created by industrial and social changes. If women wear *men's* pants, should those pants come within the jurisdiction of the union which makes *men's* clothes or *women's* clothes? These problems are not amusing to those who see their livelihood dependent upon them. Just as the union sometimes fights to retain an outmoded method of work, so in some instances a union will insist on creating unnecessary jobs;

for example, it may demand the employment of a crew of stagehands and an orchestra fixed in number irrespective of work they have to do. These are the exceptional cases of "feather-bedding" about which opponents of trade unions talk so much.

The basic cure for jurisdictional disputes and union restrictions is to remove from the worker his fear of unemployment by providing adequate unemployment compensation and by allowances which will enable him to acquire a new trade or shift to a new area when necessary. In addition, and immediately, the unions involved should strengthen their machinery to settle promptly all inter-union disputes, to safeguard the rates and conditions of the jobs, to foresee changes in industrial processes and adapt the unions to meet them.

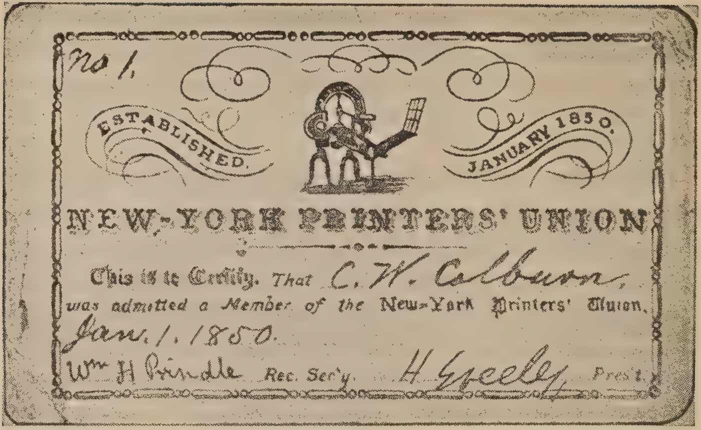
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Administration

The administration of unions shows the same variety of pattern to be seen in their membership and composition. Some unions are highly centralized with control placed in the hands of the executive board. For example, in the railroad industry, there is a nation-wide agreement and no local strikes are permitted. In other instances, such as building and printing, conditions vary from state to state and from town to town. Here there is more self-government and autonomy exercised by the union locals. This is reflected in the differing financial relations between local unions and their head office. The current trend is for a larger portion of the dues paid by each member to be remitted to the central funds.

Union Finances

Just as unions differ in their structure and controls, so they also differ in the amount of dues and initiation fees



No 1.

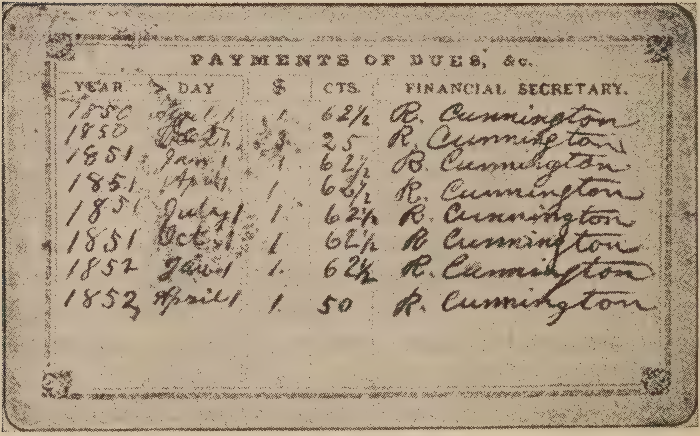
ESTABLISHED. JANUARY 1850.

NEW-YORK PRINTERS' UNION

This is to Certify, That C. W. Colburn, was admitted a Member of the New-York Printers' Union, Jan. 1. 1850.

Wm H Prindle Rec. Sec'y. H Greeley, Pres't.

Horace Greeley, who was president of the New York Printers' Union in 1850, issued this membership card in January of that year.



PAYMENTS OF DUES, &c.

YEAR	DAY	$	CTS.	FINANCIAL SECRETARY.
1850	April 1	1	62½	R. Cunnington
1850	Dec. 21	3	25	R. Cunnington
1851	Jan 1	1	62½	R. Cunnington
1851	April 1	1	62½	R. Cunnington
1851	July 1	1	62½	R. Cunnington
1851	Oct. 1	1	62½	R. Cunnington
1852	Jan 1	1	62½	R. Cunnington
1852	April 1	1	50	R. Cunnington

Culver Service

The reverse side of the card shows the amount of dues paid by this union member until April, 1852.

paid by members. Dues paid to the parent union are usually fixed by the national convention, and if union members wish to alter them, they instruct their delegates to raise the question in the convention. In some instances the local unions have the power to fix local dues, subject to supervision by the national body. Some local unions have sick-and-death benefit and unemployment funds of their own. In other cases the national body administers such funds.

Union dues are relatively low in mining because large numbers of workers are concentrated in a single mine, the output per man is easily checked, and there are long-term agreements which need few full-time officers for their enforcement. In other industries the union must exercise much more supervision and employ a large staff. In some industries, the unions must maintain large reserves for organization and strike expenditures.

Usually members pay their dues directly to the local union. But sometimes, notably in mining, dues are paid by the "check-off" system. This means deductions from the pay envelope. Miners are accustomed to such deductions for rent, fuel, medical service, and explosives; they insist upon their right to ask the company to deduct union dues and then transfer them to the union. When the Ford Company was organized, the management volunteered to assist the union in this way. Some local unions with members living in widely scattered areas have also adopted the system for more effective collection. Apart from such cases it is usually regarded as a better method for the union officers, shop chairmen, or designated members to make the collections. The individual member in making his contribution directly is impressed with his own responsibility in maintaining the union. Workers who do not pay their dues lose their rights after a specified time and must apply for readmission.

Even in the coal mining industry the "check-off" has its drawbacks in such regrettable incidents as the protests of the anthracite miners in Pennsylvania, mid-January, 1943. Here the miners stopped production of coal, badly needed in the wartime shortage of fuel, to protest against the increase in national dues from $1 to $1.50 per month, although the increase had already been adopted by the national convention. Other complications were present, such as dissatisfaction with the union officers, with the conditions for payment for Saturday work, and with the increase in the cost of living, but the members under the "check off" expressed their dissatisfaction about a union matter by stopping the industry.

In addition to dues some unions, particularly among those of highly skilled workers, charge initiation fees, which are based on the presumption that the higher standards in union workshops were won by the time and effort contributed by earlier union members. The newcomers have to pay something for these privileges. Unions which have a high percentage of chronic unemployment may impose high initiation fees as a method of controlling the influx of new workers. Fees paid by members to enter the union vary from nothing to hundreds of dollars.

In newly organized territory workers are often initiated into the union without fee. But where the worker comes into an organized industry and receives the benefit of union standards, he is expected to pay for the privilege. However, in New York City, Local 91 of the ILGWU will automatically put graduates of the Central Needle Trades High School on its membership without cost. The Bureau of Industrial Relations, set up by Freedom House and headed by John Chamberlain, made a survey of 13 leading unions which showed:

> In summary, the bureau survey of 13 leading unions shows that initiation fees range from $2 to $50. Monthly membership dues average less than $2. For these payments, at least seven of the unions provide certain monetary benefits in cases of death, sickness, or unemployment. The six A. F. of L. unions average

higher payments than the seven C. I. O. affiliates, but membership benefits in these unions are correspondingly higher.

A few glaring examples of exceedingly high fees in the building and printing trades unions have blinded the public to the fact that ordinarily union membership costs the worker relatively little. In most cases when initiation fees are more than $10 the burden should rest with the unions to prove the logical necessity of such fees.

"Viewed by the light of these standards," comments the Bureau of Industrial Relations, "the American labor movement, speaking generally, imposes no financial hardship upon its members."

The unions' balance sheets show what the members receive in benefits. The great majority of unions present a fully detailed financial report at their conventions. Some issue a report yearly and circulate it widely. However, the *compulsory* publication and circulation of union financial reports is opposed by labor on the ground that it may be dangerous for a union with a depleted treasury to risk attack from either rival unions or employers' organizations by advertising the fact of its weakness.

UNION BENEFITS AND SERVICES

Financial Aid

Long before social security was financed and administered by the state and federal governments, the unions tried to assist their members in times of illness and unemployment. An incomplete table issued by the A. F. of L. in 1942 records total benefits of over 20 million dollars paid out by its affiliates in 1941, with death benefits amounting to nearly 12 million dollars, sick benefits over 2¼ million dollars, unemployment benefits 1½ million dollars, and old-age benefits nearly 1¾ million dollars. These benefits are of course paid out of funds accumulated from the dues and assessments of union members.

Community Services

Nowadays less is spent for strikes and more in donations and gifts to worthy organizations. As one example, the yearly published audit of the ILGWU records that in the year 1940 nearly $213,000 was given to charitable and labor organizations and $332,000 to the relief of members who were sick, unemployed, etc. In the next year donations increased to over $215,000; $118,000 was spent for relief of members and over $346,000 for vacation funds. With the coming of war the donations went up to over $445,000 with relief to members falling to $89,000 and vacation funds going up to $749,000. In addition to this, $1,317,000 was raised by the contribution of a day's pay to a special War Relief Fund, out of which $570,000 was distributed in 1943.

YOUR PINT OF BLOOD
Can
Save
Him
6
AMERICAN RED CROSS

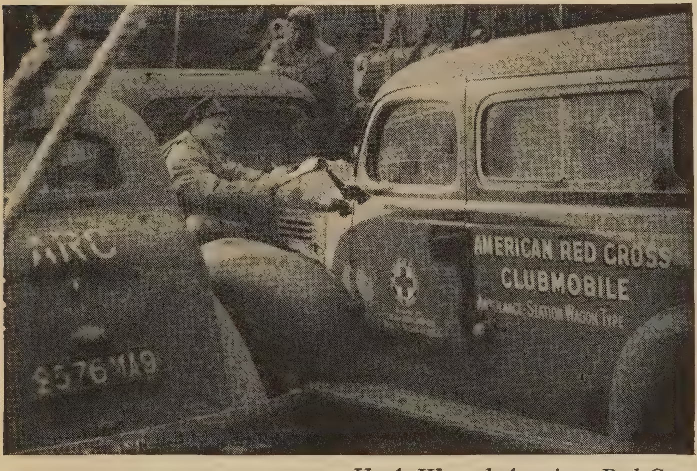
I. L. G. W. U.

Gifts in 1943 included $100,000 to the Red Cross, to which many members also gave blood, as these men are doing; $50,000 to the U. S. O. and $165,000 to the United Nations Relief Fund. These contributions were paid by a union with no more than 300,000 members and basic per capita dues of 35 cents a week.

WELCOME SERVICE MEN
WOMEN'S HEALTH BRIGADE. INTERNATIONAL LADIES GARMENT WORKERS' UNION

I. L. G. W. U.

This same union maintained a Servicemen's Labor Stage Canteen, here shown presenting some entertainment.


AMERICAN RED CROSS
CLUBMOBILE
AMBULANCE-STATION WAGON TYPE
ARC

U. A. W. and American Red Cross

The United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers (C. I. O.) claimed in 1943 that its 979,267 members had provided 200,000 men for the armed forces, had purchased $307,000,000 of War Bonds, given clubmobiles, and $4,250,000 to Red Cross and relief funds, and recruited 400,000 blood donors.

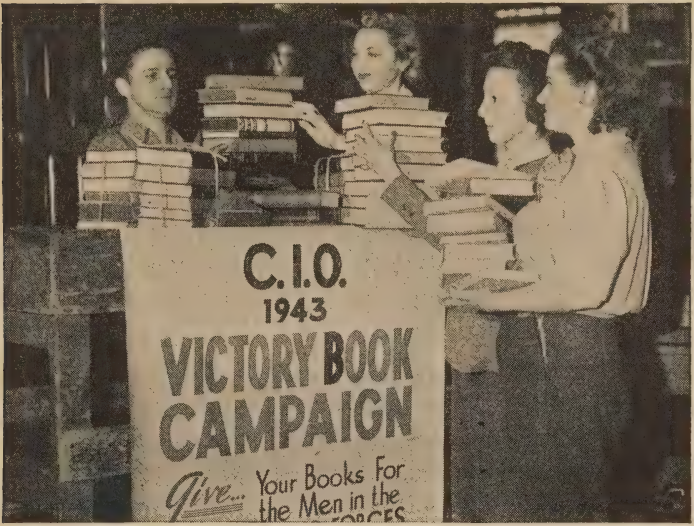
the U.A.W.A. C.I.O.

C. I. O. News

The United Auto Workers at this mammoth rally in Buffalo in 1943, also pledged themselves to stand united with the President in the war effort.

Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, photo by Hal Reiff

In fact, all the unions joined together to back the war effort. Here Philip Murray (left) of the C. I. O., William Stevens, Jr., of the New York Red Cross, and William Green (right) of the A. F. of L., hold a poster proclaiming that the Railroad Brotherhoods join with the other unions in this activity.


C.I.O.
1943
VICTORY BOOK
CAMPAIGN
Give... Your Books For the Men in the

Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America

The unions also were active in many other war projects, such as the Victory Book Campaign,—and

Bundles for our boys
Greets it's members in the Armed Forces
Christmas 1942
104
390 09

Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America

—sending Christmas boxes to their members in the Armed Forces.

Help is not only given by the unions on a national level. Bent Taylor in *Survey Graphic*, February, 1943, showed in an article, "Labor Becomes a Big Giver," the extensive contributions made to Community War Chests by the trade unions in the various cities.

Technical Training

Some unions are old-fashioned in their ways while others have streamlined their activity and carry on their work from up-to-date offices with modern accounting and administrative systems, attractive union journals, and well-equipped research departments. Some of the older unions are small and exclusive. Others are progressive and play an active role in all matters which influence the lives of their members as citizens. A number of unions provide educational, cultural and social activities.

Some of the newer unions seek to organize workers wherever they can be found. Working jointly with the organized employers and the vocational schools, a number of them operate plans for training young workers. In New York City the Board of Education, the organized employers, and workers jointly form an advisory board for vocational education. Some unions have their own schools to keep their members abreast of technical developments. The union of the barbers runs a school and also correspondence courses in the tonsorial arts; teachers' union locals organize "alertness" courses for members. A well-established example of such work is the technical school run by the Printing Pressmen's Union (about 50,000 members) which in the last 30 years has spent over two million dollars in promoting union-management coöperation and its technical and advisory services. All new machines and processes are carefully examined and workers trained to use them, often before they have been widely installed by the employers. Members of the union take courses at the school and receive certificates upon completion of examinations; some 10,000 have completed courses. The union will send in its experts to advise a printing firm upon its production problems.

Here is a summary given by Mr. H. Y. Feldman, Director of Research for the union:

> The International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America has constantly worked to improve the technical knowledge and skills of its members. In 1890, when the Union first published its monthly magazine, *The American Pressman,* it was determined, as a matter of policy, that the publication should be devoted to the advancement of the pressmen's craft. Today it is recognized as one of the leading technical publications in the printing industry and is regularly subscribed to by hundreds of printing executives. All members of the Union receive the magazine without charge.
>
> Although *The American Pressman* was a unique experiment in the contribution by a labor union to the technical knowledge of an industry, the Union realized that more formal instruction and training was necessary, not only for the development of competent pressmen through a planned apprenticeship system, but also for encouraging pressmen already working in the industry to improve and expand their skills. With these separate, yet related, objectives in mind, the Pressmen's Union has developed a thorough and comprehensive apprenticeship training program and, since 1912, has operated a Technical Trade School of printing and press work, at the headquarters of the Union at Pressmen's Home, Tennessee.
>
> The apprenticeship program is based upon the premise that to produce a skilled craftsman requires the combination of sound instruction in the basic principles of printing processes and press operation with practical experience in producing printing. "On-the-job" training is, of course, required, but in addition all apprentices must register with the International Union and receive a correspondence course prepared by the Technical Trade School. The courses cover all of the most important types of press work—letterpress, offset, newspaper

and rotogravure—and many specialty branches as well. Local apprenticeships committees composed of union and management representatives jointly provide rules for the government of apprentices, and quarterly examinations based upon the correspondence courses must be passed by the prospective pressmen. Unless these educational requirements are met, the apprentice loses his apprenticeship standing. So comprehensive and up-to-date are the correspondence courses that many journeymen pressmen request a set for their own use in solving their day-to-day technical problems.

When the Technical Trade School was established, it represented the first instance where a national labor union assumed the responsibility for both improving the skills and craftsmanship of its journeymen members through a course of practical instruction and for acting as a technical aid to pressmen and printing employers in the industry. The school is staffed by supervisors and instructors with practical experience who are thoroughly familiar with all of the technical details involved in the pressman's trade. The course of instruction is designed for journeymen who have already had pressroom experience and who have proved their competency on the job. As a result, the school attracts the more progressive and ambitious pressmen and has been utilized by many employers as a training ground for future executives and supervisory officials.

At the school, a pressman may learn the latest techniques and processes; he is taught to operate skillfully the most modern types of letterpress and offset equipment which are donated to the Union by leading manufacturers who realize the advantage of the Technical Trade School to their own industry. The courses of instruction are intensive but thorough, usually lasting from six weeks to six months.

Complementing the apprentice training program and the trade school, the Pressmen's Union also has prepared and offers to its members technical courses for journeymen pressmen in both the newspaper and the commercial offset fields. These courses have proved of immense value to pressmen in meeting everyday problems and offer those members who are unable to attend the school a practical means of improving and expanding their skills.

In addition to offering formal instruction, the school, and the Newspaper Engineering Department as well, act as service agencies, answering each week dozens of requests from pressmen and printing employers relative to technical problems in the pressroom.

Considered solely from the point of view of their function in providing job security by offering the members of the Union a chance to keep up with technological changes in the industry, the Technical Trade School and Newspaper Engineering Department have fully justified their existence and the confidence of the Union in promoting these services for its members. In addition the school and engineering services are examples of the union-management coöperation which has been a feature of the policy of the Pressmen's Union for the past quarter of a century.

The journals of the A. F. of L. craft unions—plumbers, barbers, lithographers, typographers, steam fitters, electricians—and of the railroad brotherhoods devote considerable space to the technical problems and the new inventions of their trades. These men have invested their lives in the industry and the skills necessary thereto.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Look up the most recent Convention Reports of the A. F. of L. and C. I. O., to find out: (a) the per capita membership; (b) the amount expended in strike benefits; (c) the amount expended in sick and death benefits.
2. Would the following statements written by Samuel Gompers, president of the A. F. of L. in 1914, express the viewpoint of the A. F. of L. in 1944? If there are differences, explain what you think to be their causes.

   "The A. F. of L. is not in favor of fixing, by legal enactment, certain minimum wages. The attempts of the government to establish wages at which workmen may work, according to the teachings of history, will result in a long era of industrial slavery.

"Wherever the workers are most active politically and place their faith in a political party for the attainment of their rights and interests, there they lose sight of their economic interests, believing that by casting their vote once a year they can secure remedial legislation that will take the place of the work of trade unionism."

3. Prepare to discuss the following statement taken from an editorial in the *New Republic*, June 21, 1943:

   "The only things wrong with trade unions today are the fringes of racketeering in some parts of the labor movement. This could be remedied by an act making periodic elections mandatory in all trade unions and providing for publicity of accounts. But the present act [Smith-Connally] does neither. Its real purpose is revealed in the final provision outlawing all financial contributions by trade unions to election campaigns."

4. The above picture shows part of the technical training furnished by their school at Pressmen's Home, Tennessee, by the Printing Pressmen's Union. Organize in your class a panel discussion on the relative educational values of technical education by unions and vocational education in public high schools. (*Printing Pressmen's Union*)

CHAPTER XI

Unions in Action

IN STUDYING THE EVOLUTION OF TRADE UNIONS IN THE United States, comparing their variety, their structure, and what they do, and in analyzing their problems, their financing and administration, we have anticipated to some extent their current activities. Some further questions, however, remain unanswered. What are the various degrees of union control? How do the unions combat their foes and coöperate with their friends? What agencies exist for settling complaints? What is the government's role in settling labor disputes? Then, too, what do the unions do for their members outside of wages and hours and shop conditions? Do they assist them as citizens to exercise their political rights and help them to secure good laws and effective government administrators? Do they aid their members in protecting themselves as consumers from too high prices and inferior goods? What can unions do to make their members more thoughtful, intelligent citizens?

Controls

The degree of union control within the shop or plant is indicated by various descriptive terms used. Students should note the distinctions in the various stages of union growth.

Closed Shop: Only union members can be hired and workers must remain union members to retain employment. In some cases the union supplies new workers directly from its membership rolls; in others the employer may hire workers directly, provided the union concurrently admits them to membership. The employer has a trial period to test the worker's capacity, after which he can be discharged only with the consent of the union. Obtaining the closed shop is a main objective with most unions.

Union Shop: Non-members may be hired, but to retain employment must become union members after a certain period. This check-up is usually made by the shop chairman or steward.

Preferential Shop: Union members are given preference in hiring or layoff, or both. But workers are not compelled to join the union as a condition of retaining employment.

Maintenance of Membership Shop: No one is forced to join the union, but all present or future members must remain in good standing as a condition of employment. This practice has been enforced by the War Labor Board in various contested cases where the union, bound by a wartime no-strike agreement, fears losses in membership when it gives up the right to ask its members not to work with non-members.

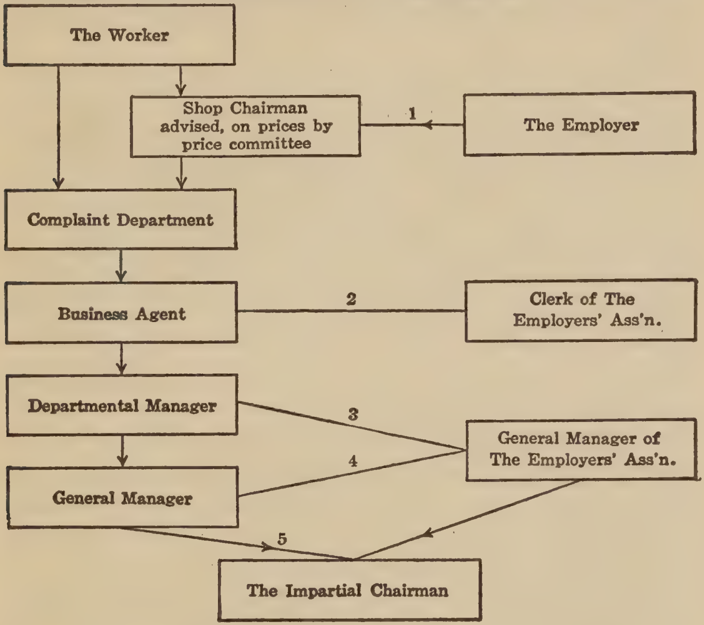
Exclusive Bargaining Shop: The union is recognized as the exclusive bargaining agent for all employees, whether union members or not.

Bargaining for Members Only: The union is recognized as the bargaining agent only for its own members.

BARGAINING AND COÖPERATION

What the precinct is to the politician, the local shop or plant is to the union leader. The functions of the union in the workshop are basic. Usually there is a shop steward or a shop chairman who is elected by the workers on the job. In case of any difficulty or grievance, the shop chairman receives a report from the individual member. If the matter is a minor one, the shop chairman sees the foreman or, in a small shop, the employer. If a more important principle is involved, then this is referred to the union's shop committee. Many locals have business agents who supervise several plants or shops. Of course, the methods of administration are determined by the scale of the industry. In many shops the chairman is a worker, but in a large plant the plant chairman must devote all his time to the work and serve as a whole-time officer paid by the union.

DIAGRAM OF THE ADJUSTMENT OF A COMPLAINT OF A WORKER, FROM THE TIME IT IS MADE TO THE SHOP CHAIRMAN TO THE IMPARTIAL CHAIRMAN.


The Worker
Shop Chairman advised, on prices by price committee
1
The Employer
Complaint Department
Business Agent
2
Clerk of The Employers' Ass'n.
Departmental Manager
3
General Manager of The Employers' Ass'n.
4
General Manager
5
The Impartial Chairman

(1) Indicates the effort of the Shop Chairman to adjust the complaint. If he fails, he refers it to the complaint department and (2) shows the business agent's attempt to adjust it with the clerk of the Association to which the employer belongs. That failing, (3) is the departmental manager's negotiation with the general manager of the association; then, next, (4) the Joint Board general manager's attempt with the general manager of the association. (5) is the last resort complaint to the Impartial Chairman.

Grievance Procedures

In most industries where collective bargaining has been functioning for some years, there is a clearly understood procedure whereby every grievance is presented for consideration to a joint body representing the workers and the employers. This is really what collective bargaining means —representatives of the workers as a group meeting with representatives of the employers. Investigators currently report a strong trend to industry-wide collective bargaining with both workers and employers extending their organizations.

The great aim of a union in organization is to secure a written agreement which specifies the rates of wages and the conditions of work. (See Appendix for a digest of sample agreement.) The clauses of this agreement, however, are always subject to conflicting interpretations, and these differences of opinion can be best settled when the representatives of labor and of the employers meet around the table. In some instances there is an arbitrator or an impartial chairman to whom unsolved problems are finally referred. It is important to remember that for every single dispute which comes to public attention, there are thousands of differences ironed out without any interruption of production and about which the public never hears. If negotiations break down, either the employer may shut his plant (a lock-out) or the workers may stop work (a strike). The strike may be a local one or as wide as the industry. Sometimes workers refuse to handle goods made in shops on strike or stop work themselves in sympathy. In the "sit-down" strike workers remain idle at their machines.

Government Aids to Collective Bargaining

In order to prevent lock-outs and stoppages, the U. S. Department of Labor operates a Conciliation Service in addition to its main job of compiling authoritative statistics and making them available to Congress and the people of the United States. Within recent years the National Labor Relations Board has been set up to regulate collective bargaining by conducting elections to determine what union shall represent the workers. The employer must negotiate with the union certified by the NLRB.

The Department of Labor, established in 1913, is represented in the Presidential cabinet by its Secretary. It has subdivisions in the form of bureaus for labor statistics, women, children, labor standards, unemployment registration, enforcement of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and the Conciliation Service. The staff of the Conciliation Service have no power to intervene or compel the acceptance of their findings; they must be called in either by the employers, employees, or members of the general public affected by a trade dispute. Reports show that from 1929 onward the Conciliation Service handled 500 to 600 disputes yearly. For the railroads there is a special Board of Mediation authorized in 1926 by the Railroad Labor Act. This settles most of the disputes which arise or refers them to arbitration.

The National War Labor Board, most recent agency for the prevention of strikes, was established by executive order of President Roosevelt in January, 1942. It is composed of twelve members, four each representing the public, the employers, and the employees, and all named by the President. It operates from Washington and from ten regional offices, and has power to make final settlement of all disputes. By an order of October, 1942, no increase in wage rates or in salary rates under $5,000 yearly can be made without the approval of the War Labor Board.

Its predecessor, the National Mediation Board, had foundered upon the controversy over the closed shop. The War Labor Board has accepted a compromise, "the union maintenance clause," which provides that all employees who are members of the union when the contract is made must maintain their membership during the duration of the contract. The W. L. B. succeeded in eliminating strikes save in exceptional cases of outlaw disputes. The United Mine Workers, however, in 1943 refused for a while to bring before the W. L. B. its deadlock with the employers over making a new contract. After two short mine stoppages, the government took over the mines, as it did in the smaller case of the Federal Shipbuilding Company.

The W. L. B. applied the "Little Steel" formula, which in general limited all wage increases to 15 per cent above those rates paid in January, 1941, although the unions asserted that the cost of living had gone up much higher than that and that their members were suffering a cut in real wages. To meet this argument the government tried to roll back prices and stabilize the cost of living.

Disputes which deal with wage claims are certified to the W. L. B. by the U. S. Department of Labor for settlement. The Chairman of the War Labor Board, William H. Davis, commenting upon the twelve regional boards established and the many difficult problems adjusted, forecast in *Victory* (Jan. 27, 1943) that these activities will "leave behind them, as a permanent contribution, a new way of settling old differences and a bond of mutual trust between labor and industry apt to play a large part in building that future America of which our fellow countrymen in uniform dream when there is a lull in the fighting overseas."

The test which faces the unions and the employers' organizations is whether this coöperation can be continued and extended to the times of peace and to cover all industries. If so, the chances for improved industrial relationships will be good. Energy formerly spent in defense and attack by unions and employers' associations can be harnessed to industrial statesmanship and the common good.

For many years the American labor movement practiced what Professor Hoxie named "business unionism," which meant that each union concentrated upon wages and hours and conditions and did not advocate general ideals of labor solidarity. Other investigators insisted that the American labor unions were job-conscious and not class-conscious like the European unions. Another notable difference was in the relation of the unions to the state here and abroad. However, the psychology of American labor was altered by the depression which started in 1929, and by the New Deal policies which operated in the decade, 1933–1943.

While Gompers had tried to avoid government action, the unions under the New Deal became fully conscious of the help which the state could render to labor. When private enterprise had failed to meet the problems of the depression, it was the New Deal government agencies which provided jobs for the unemployed. When the company unions of the employers had in many instances kept labor weak in the basic industries, it was the National Labor Relations Act which gave the workers the right to decide what union was to represent them. Such elections were instituted by the governmental agency and kept free from any interference by the employers.

The Smith-Connally Bill which was rushed through Congress in the hot days of June, 1943, over the President's veto, was an expression of the fear that labor had become too powerful, and the act itself demonstrated that labor could have its liberties reduced as well as increased by government. The attempt, under the act, to restrict the participation of unions in politics showed that the anti-union forces in Congress realized their own power was threatened by political action on the part of labor.

As explained in Chapter IX, the National Labor Relations Act (Wagner) was set up to preserve the intent of Section 7-a of the National Industry Recovery Act when the Supreme Court decided that NIRA was unconstitutional. The Wagner Act empowered the National Labor Relations Board to investigate labor controversies and to see that employees enjoy the right of collective bargaining through representatives of their own choosing and without any interference from employers. The NLRB became an independent agency by an act of Congress in 1935 and it took over the 21 regional offices which had been set up in 1934. The Board prevents employer interference with workers' rights of self-organization. It can order the employer to disband a company union, to reëmploy workers discharged for union activity and to meet union representatives of the employees. Elections conducted by the NLRB certify the union which secures the votes of a majority of the workers in a given plant or craft unit.

During the years 1935 to 1942, the Board handled 46,986 cases. In cases of non-compliance, the Board takes the matter up in the Circuit Court of Appeals. Out of 35 cases which were taken to the Supreme Court, up to 1943, the Board was sustained in 33. Nearly 6,000 elections were conducted by the NLRB in its first six years. The first rush of work has lessened but the NLRB remains an important agency to prevent strikes called to secure union recognition. Some states have passed "Little Wagner Acts" to cover industrial relations in local industry not included in interstate commerce. The A. F. of L.-C. I. O. division in the labor movement has greatly complicated the work of the NLRB because rival unions argue for different units appropriate for the election and operation of collective bargaining agencies.

POLITICAL ACTION

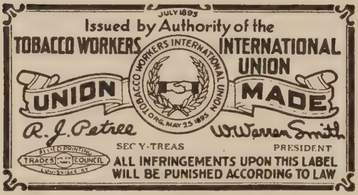
Union Lobbies

In addition to their basic industrial functions, the unions have increased their organized political pressure in recent years. This they do through A. F. of L. and C. I. O. representatives in Washington or directly through their own representatives in the lobbies of the legislatures and of Congress itself. The railway unions have over a period of years maintained lobbyists in Washington because their industry is subject to federal regulation. Both the A. F. of L. and C. I. O. set up state and city groupings to deal with state and city problems. (See Diagram on page 111.) They often thus ward off attacks made against them by employers' lobbies. They secure improved conditions by getting new laws and regulations passed. More recently the unions have exerted pressure to make laws fixing minimum wages (Fair Labor Standards Act), to improve unemployment insurance and old-age pensions and to secure subsidies to keep down the wartime cost of living. They have also been interested in preventing attempts by legislators to interfere with administration of the unions, as in the case of the Smith-Connally Act.

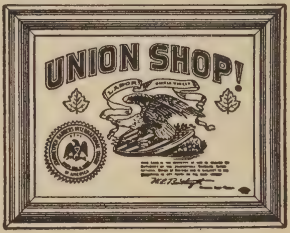
Labor and Political Parties

Some unions think that the labor movement in the United States should do what has been done in other countries, namely, build up a political party of its own to represent the workers of hand and brain instead of confining its activity to lobbying legislators. In the United States there has not been the same necessity for a separate party because through the traditional two-party system and the party primary elections labor may get its own nominee elected in the preliminary run-offs. In this way the nominee of the unions is run under the label of the older Democratic and Republican parties. Moreover, there are legal difficulties in putting a new party on the ballot. In other countries labor could not "capture the primary" and can run candidates without having to collect a large number of signatures for a new party to get a place on the ballot.

Both the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. have so far officially adhered to the old-time slogan: "Reward your friends and punish your enemies." However, in New York State some of the unions have set up a political party independent of the older parties. It is difficult to know whether this will spread, but the experiment is being watched with considerable interest. Political action by the labor unions received considerable impetus in 1943. Anti-union laws were proposed by 44 states and actually adopted in 9. In addition the Smith-Connally bill was passed by Congress over the Presidential veto. The C. I. O. was particularly active in calling conferences to organize pressure upon Congressmen but rejected plans for a third party, preferring to continue giving its financial support to the C. I. O. Committee for Political Action.[1]


JULY 1895
Issued by Authority of the
TOBACCO WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL UNION
UNION
MADE
TOBACCO WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION
ORG. MAY 25 1895
R. J. Petree
W. Warren Smith
SEC'Y-TREAS
PRESIDENT
ALLIED PRINTING TRADES COUNCIL
ALL INFRINGEMENTS UPON THIS LABEL WILL BE PUNISHED ACCORDING TO LAW

Tobacco Workers' Label


UNION SHOP!
LABOR

Barbers' Union Card

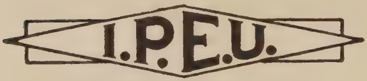
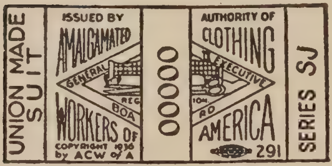
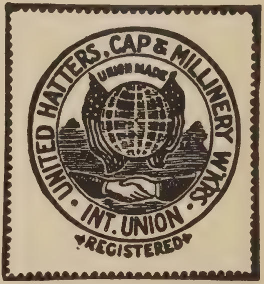


Photo-Engravers' Label


UNION MADE
SUIT
ISSUED BY
AMALGAMATED
GENERAL
REG
BOA
WORKERS OF
COPYRIGHT 1936
by ACW of A
00000
AUTHORITY OF
CLOTHING
EXECUTIVE
ION
RD
AMERICA
291
SERIES SJ

Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Label


UNITED HATTERS, CAP & MILLINERY WKRS.
UNION MADE
INT. UNION
REGISTERED

Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers' Label

Examples of Union Labels

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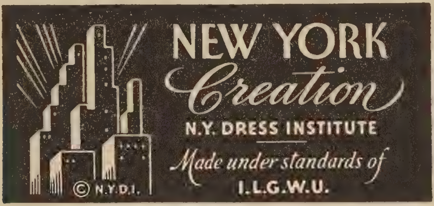
[1] See "How to Choke Unions" by Victor Riesel for analysis of forces pressing for anti-union laws (*Nation*, July 31, 1943).

WORKING THROUGH CONSUMER PRESSURE

Another method of influencing the employer is the use of the union label and lists of union-made goods. The purpose is to encourage the buyer to look for a union label upon the article he buys or to consult the union approved list. Then too he will look for a display card, say, in the barber's shop, showing that the barber belongs to the union. In some instances employers join with unions to issue a label guaranteeing production under fair labor conditions and business practices. The National Coat and Suit Industry Recovery Board is an example of the latter. The label guides not only trade union members in their desire to buy union-made commodities; many social minded members of the general public look for the label so that they can be sure to buy the products of firms who deal with unions.



In some cases labels are adopted jointly by the organized employers and the trade unions. Best known examples of these are the Coat and Suit Industry Recovery Board and the New York Dress Institute, shown here.

Coöperatives

Logically influencing the consumer leads to the union's relation to consumer organizations. While support for consumers' coöperatives is increasing among union members and leaders, there is not in the United States the close alliance with labor to be noted in Britain, Sweden, and other countries. The coöperative movement in the United States is strongest among the farmers and the professional workers. The various consumer protective groups such as Consumers' Union do not receive any wide official support from unions as such, although an increasing number feature consumer protection articles in their journals.

The freezing of wages in wartime turned the interest of the trade unions to the cost of living and their interest as consumers. The United Auto Workers appointed a special consumers' counsel to act on its behalf and inform its members on appropriate action. Defending their members as consumers against inflated prices, bad quality goods, commodities improperly graded, and such evils will lead the unions into a closer relationship with the coöperative movement which controls price and quality by owning the productive and distributive agencies.[2] This development may also lead to a closer understanding with the working farmers. The A. F. of L., the C. I. O. and the Railroad Brotherhoods have coöperated in recent years with the Farmers' Union, which includes the small "dirt" farmers anxious to secure protection from the middle-men.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS

Amid all these details of trade union structure and policy, the union member's emotional attachment to his union may easily be overlooked. John Jones exercises his right to criticize his union but he does not underestimate what it means to him. Instead of the old-time sun-up to sun-down workday for low wages, his work-week has been reduced to 35 to 40 hours. His wages may not be as large as he thinks he deserves, but now he can collectively present his claims for a higher standard of life. The steward or chairman of his shop must listen to any justifiable complaint and take it up with the foreman or the employer. If necessary his complaint can be carried through all the various stages of grievance procedures already described.

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[2] See *Our Interests as Consumers* by Dorothy Houston Jacobson, Harpers, 1941, pp. 227–310.

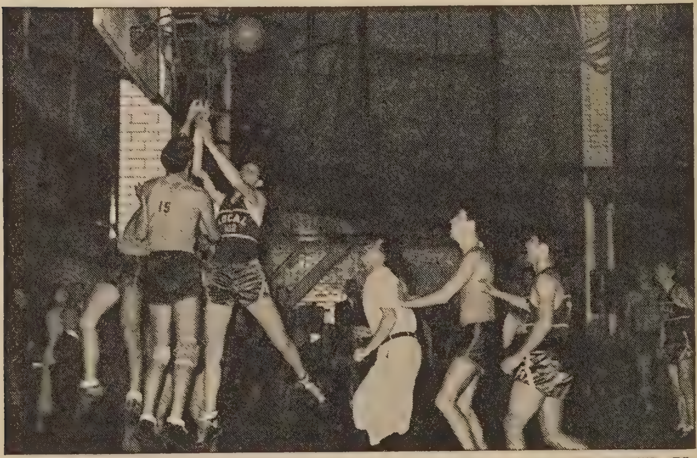
I. L. G. W. U., photo by K. Joseph

In a modern workshop like this the worker does not have to put up with petty tyrannies and insults. He can complain to his shop steward or chairman about work difficulties, bad ventilation, or lack of drinking water. If the point is important enough, it goes to arbitration with all the power and skill of union officers helping the worker.

Suppose John was working in a non-union shop. He could persuade his fellow workers to sign up for union membership and then, if necessary, get the National Labor Relations Board to set up an election to determine which union, if any, should be recognized as their agency for collective bargaining. John remembers when the employer was able to fire and blacklist workers known to be union members and build his own company union. If John likes responsibility he can gratify his desires by becoming a union officer, a shop chairman, an executive board member. The union study classes, institutes and publications help to fit him to shoulder such responsibilities. He learns how to speak in public and to participate in meetings. When he hears about the early struggles and present strength of his own and other unions, he gets the feeling of belonging to a large and powerful movement with an important role to play in his community. He knows too that his legitimate desires (and those of his family) for culture and recreation can be satisfied through his organization. By collective self-help John Jones can win social security.

I. L. G. W. U., photo by K. Joseph

In addition to escaping tyranny in the shop and enjoying a sense of importance as a union officer, the worker, in many unions, has opportunities for education, study classes, lectures, etc. He can participate in the union chorus or orchestra, or mandolin club like this one, or—

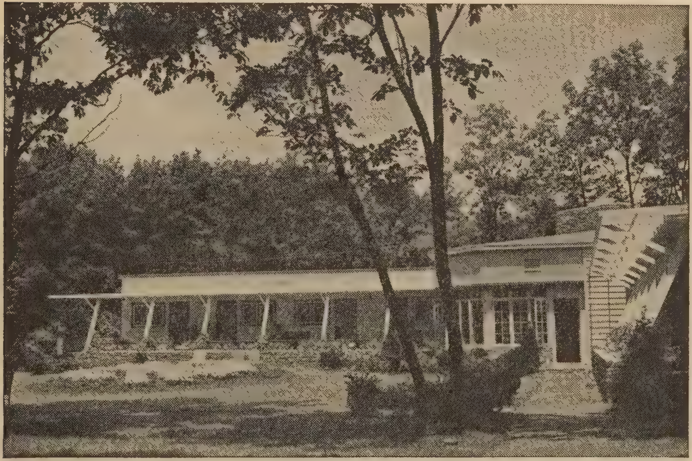


I. L. G. W. U.

—more strenuously, in athletic sports.

Amalgated Clothing Workers of America

Some unions have art and crafts classes to which the worker can bring his children, and there is a women's auxiliary in which his wife can meet friends.



I. L. G. W. U.

His health will be protected by the union clinic, and he can take his holidays at his union's vacation camp, like this one. If he is unemployed, the union will help get his insurance benefits; if he is injured at work, the union will help him to secure his compensation rights. When he becomes sick or gets old the union sick benefit and pension funds come to his aid.

Beneath all the efforts made by the unions in their wage agreements, their union label activity, the sick and death benefits, their pension plans, and political programs, there is the aim of security for the worker. A worker may have a high wage rate and yet be employed such a small part of a year that his annual wage will be below the minimum required by decent standards. He may be out of work simply because he does not know about jobs available in other parts of the country.

In order to help their members escape the loan sharks, many unions have set up credit unions. The members bank together in order to set up a fund which can be loaned in times of need, such as an operation. Because the workers in a shop know each other well the risk of lost loans is reduced and interest rates are low. In 1943 there were 464 credit unions serving union members.

I. L. G. W. U.

Some unions maintain clinics or have arrangements with doctors so that workers can receive mass examinations in coöperation with public health authorities to help prevent ill health. Here a group of union workers is receiving X-ray examination.

Printing Pressmen's Union

Unions have in recent years also taken up hospitalization and medical service, and in some cases have built sanitariums, such as this one at Pressmen's Home, Tennessee, for the use of their members. This logically follows their support for workmen's compensation laws and their aid in securing the application of these laws for their members injured at their work.

THE UNION'S CONTRIBUTION TO CITIZENSHIP

Education

In addition to meeting physical and immediate needs of the members, many unions provide educational facilities. These can be roughly divided into two groups: *technical* and *social*. In the first group we have already seen that a number of craft unions set up special trade schools for their members. These vocational skills help citizens in the art of doing things. Other social and educational activities train new members in the rights and duties of membership and in skills for becoming better citizens and human beings. Workers are encouraged to come to classes in English and parliamentary law or to train as officers of the union. Educational talks by union officers and special speakers are given in union meetings to explain current union problems and policies. General political and industrial happenings are also interpreted. Movies are shown to arouse interest in health problems.

I. L. G. W. U.

Special classes like this one for union stewards and shop chairmen are maintained so that the contract with the employer will be properly applied with a minimum of friction and delay.—

I. L. G. W. U.

There are extensive trade union educational programs which give knowledge in social science and other subjects to trade union members like this group studying first aid. The members study wages, prices, and inflation; they learn about the history of their own union, of the labor movement, and of the United States so that they can become more intelligent participants in social life and in their own labor groups.—

Amalgated Clothing Workers of America

—Furthermore, with the spread of labor unions, they have also been able to develop cultural and recreational work. In that way the unions capture the interest of their younger members who are not usually attracted to study classes but will play on the union baseball team or take part in its other recreational activity, such as the one-day outing this group is discussing.

Unions which are particularly active in this field include the United Auto Workers, Textile Workers' Union of America, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, United Wholesale and Retail Clerks, the Office and Professional Workers, and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. The following text of a press release shows the variety and extent of the educational work in a pre-war year:

The report of the Educational Department, ILGWU, for the year ending May 31, 1940, records a total of 823 classes and groups attended by 18,200 students, compared with 673 and 16,464 reported for 1938–39. The average length of each class was 11 sessions with an average of 24 students per class.

Two hundred and seventy-eight study classes, 154 music, 78 dramatics, 80 dancing, 167 gym and 66 athletic teams were included in the total. Study classes took up the following subjects in this order of importance: Trade Union Problems, Public

Speaking and Parliamentary Law, Labor Union History and Current Events.

The music groups range from the New York Chorus (120 voices) and Symphony Orchestra (40 pieces) with annual concerts, to small groups of 10 to 12 members in small towns of the South and Middle West. The New York Cultural Division provided 76½ hours of instruction weekly for music (choral and instrumental), dramatics and dancing groups and was responsible for the mass pageant 'I Hear America Singing' presented recently at Madison Square Garden.

Among recent innovations are an art workshop, horseback riding, photo and cycling groups and an active union fife and drum corps. Increasing in importance are classes for new members, time and motion study, and officers' qualification courses, now compulsory for would-be full-time union officers.

Varied and extensive forms of mass education (excursions, trips, movies, filmstrips, lectures, forums, radio broadcasts, educational meetings) supplemented the regular class work. Forty locals maintained active libraries for educational purposes.

The Workers Education Bureau links together various unions for A. F. of L. educational activity, particularly in the running of institutes. The American Labor Education Service helps to organize and maintain summer schools and serves as a consultant to labor unions. A number of unions provide scholarships for their members at the Summer School for Workers, Wisconsin University, and at Hudson Shore Labor School, West Park, N. Y. Starting in 1942, trade union fellowships were begun by Harvard to train for union leadership.[3]

Union Press

The majority of unions have their own papers, mostly devoted to trade matters and their own union business. Besides local labor papers, both the A. F. of L. and C. I. O. issue journals. The *American Labor Press Directory* (1941) listed 676 labor publications, of which 30 were Canadian. Of this number, 327 publications were official organs of branches of the American Federation of Labor, while 110 were published by affiliates of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The 239 remaining labor publications were sponsored by independent labor organizations, fraternal organizations, political parties, and even private individuals.

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[3] *Workers Education in the United States*, edited by Theodore Brameld (Harpers, 1941), is the best and most recent survey in this field.

JUSTICE
JUSTICIA
HOW TO CONDUCT A UNION MEETING
INTRODUCIENDO VUESTRA UNION
INTRODUCING YOUR UNION
YOU AND YOUR UNION
THE STORY OF THE I. L. G. W. U.
GIUSTIZIA
LET'S SING!
American Federationist
JUSTICE
ILGWU Launches Union Label; Begins With Cotton Dresses
Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen's Magazine
WORKERS

The *American Federationist* is the official A. F. of L. magazine; the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen have their own magazine (lower right); the remainder of the publications here illustrated are from the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

The chief labor press services are *AFL Weekly News Service*, *International Labor News Service* (weekly and monthly), the *Federated Press* (daily), and *Union News*

Service (C. I. O.). The C. I. O. issues a national edition of the *C. I. O. News* and special editions for particular unions or localities. So far there is no labor daily newspaper, but within recent years most of the reputable city newspapers have well-informed labor correspondents who specialize in collecting and interpreting news in the field of labor. The railroad unions maintain a weekly newspaper, *Labor*, sent by mail to all members. The *American Federationist* is issued by the A. F. of L. monthly, and in recent years has become a streamlined modern pictorial. Among individual union journals outstanding for their coverage of general and political news in addition to trade matters are *Advance* (monthly organ of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers), *Justice* (fortnightly, ILGWU), the *Journal of the Electrical Workers* (monthly, Brotherhood of Electrical Workers), *Railway Clerk* (monthly, Brotherhood of Railway Clerks). Examples of local labor papers are *Chicago Federation News*, *Atlanta Journal of Labor*, *Kenosha Labor*, and *Labor Record* (Philadelphia). The editors of union papers meet in conferences to discuss their problems and policies.

The whole question of improved public relations work by the unions has received considerable attention. The C. I. O. and A. F. of L. in 1942 began a series of weekly nation-wide broadcasts on labor's role in victory. There are local radio stations, such as WEVD in New York City, which are sympathetic to labor, and WCFL in Chicago is owned by the labor unions. Despite some improvements, the trade unions are not well and favorably represented in either radio or movies. However, opinion surveys show that, while many people are misinformed about unions, their purpose and utility are accepted even by non-members.

Research

Closely allied to the educational activities of the unions and their journals are the research departments which study wages, hours, profits, etc., and general industrial conditions.

In some instances where technical research of employers' groups is adequate, the union's research staff interprets the social results of technical changes. In the case of smaller industrial employers, the union may investigate technical methods. In one or two instances industrial engineers have been provided by the union. The relationship of the union to scientific management is treated in *The Relationship between the Unions and Engineers* by William Gomberg (see *Mechanical Engineering*, June, 1943), and the technical aid given by workers is demonstrated in *Production Problems: Handbook for Committeemen* published by the United Steel Workers. Undoubtedly if union-management coöperation grows, there will be more examples of coöperation and joint research in solving the production and distribution problems of industry.

Usually research is maintained by the unions to equip their representatives with facts to use in negotiations and arbitration cases. This is a more civilized method than the use of strong arm methods on the picket line. The A. F. of L. issues a *Monthly Economic Survey* and the C. I. O. an *Economic Outlook* to make known their research findings on prices, wages and profits. Union research staffs are closely in touch with the U. S. Department of Labor. Its Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1940 called together 33 labor research groups for the first annual conference. However, many union research groups are not adequately staffed for their job of convincing the employers, the general public, the arbitrators and impartial chairmen, and the union members themselves of the feasibility and soundness of union claims.[4]

International Links

Many American unions are affiliated to particular trade internationals such as those of the mine workers and needle trades. The A. F. of L. is now and has been for many years

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[4] See *Labor Information Bulletin* (September, 1941 and May, 1942) for description of A. F. of L. research activity. Also reports of four annual conferences organized by Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(with a short interruption) affiliated to the International Federation of Trade Unions. Both A. F. of L. and C. I. O. send and receive fraternal convention delegates from Canada, South America, and Britain. American labor was prominent in the formation of the International Labor Office, an important and continuing part of the League of Nations, and is still an affiliated and active member. Even before the Second World War intensified the need for international unity, American labor had maintained beneficial contact with labor unions in other countries. American labor favors extending the facilities of the I. L. O. and the rehabilitation of the trade unions in the Nazi conquered countries.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The story of American labor as told in this textbook has been one of struggle. Too often bitter industrial civil war has been waged. The requests of the unions, however, for the shorter work-day and work-week, for higher wages, and for a better standard of life have proved to be in line with community progress. Individual employers and firms for many years had tried to institute profit-sharing and incentive plans or to organize their business to secure a full year's work. In the main these schemes suffered because the workers thought that something was being done *for* them instead of *by* them. In other cases ulterior motives were suspected and indeed became obvious. Only exceptional firms could make such experiments because the average individual employer cannot change the general conditions of industry.

The recognition now accorded to the unions, the legality of collective bargaining, and the greater strength and consequent responsibility of the unions since 1933 created a new situation prior to the Second World War. The intelligent coöperation of employer and employee, beneficial in peacetime, became indispensable in wartime. Under the stimulus of the War Production Board, the teamwork of

War Production Board

A labor-management production committee at work. By giving the workers a feeling of belonging and of participation, these committees help to sustain morale at a high level.

labor with management toward achieving the greatest possible production was extended to nearly 5,000 war plants. These Labor and Management Production Committees, using original techniques, developed the workers' contribution with management to the joint task of winning the battle of production. Through these Committees, in addition to other results, absenteeism and labor turn-over were reduced, quality was improved, plants made more efficient in their operations, work hazards reduced, and the suggestions of workers converted into millions of production man-hours saved as well as thousands of tons of badly needed materials conserved.[5]

Like other human institutions, the trade unions have made mistakes. They sometimes antagonize a would-be sympathetic public by jurisdictional disputes. Sometimes unions are not conscious of their wider responsibilities to the community and to the nation. When individual members do not attend meetings and vote, the union officers may become entrenched for life and autocratic in their behavior; hence the organizations suffer from a lack of internal democracy. Unions may endeavor to oppose new methods of production or refuse to let enough entrants learn their trade. Some unions discriminate against Negroes and members of other minority groups.

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[5] Pamphlets and articles describing the work of these Committees will be found in the Bibliography in Appendix.

However, on the whole, labor has a long and honorable record of community service. Many union regulations which seem restrictive are based on considerations of safety and work quality. Some "feather-bedding" rules (enforcing unnecessary work and jobs) arise from past fears of unemployment which have caused the union to "make work." The best safeguard against the faults mentioned is not government regulation but the intelligence of union members in conjunction with an informed public opinion. The unions represent a genuine effort in self-help made by people of the United States. They have protected their members from the ravages of insecurity and have made tremendous contributions to community welfare. Unions are now spreading out to white-collar and professional workers. They are actively coöperating with enlightened employers in our wartime effort. They represent an attempt to gain security with a minimum sacrifice of individual freedom. The future of the United States is intimately bound up with the wisdom and intelligence of the members of its unions because of their great power and importance in our community.

The small craft unions of the eighteenth century have grown as we have seen into powerful organizations nationwide in their scope and linked up with their counterparts in other countries. The unions are the only way in which the workers can meet directors of corporations and the large-scale enterprise on terms of equality. They are particularly concerned with realizing for the community the third great freedom of the Atlantic Charter—freedom from want. They make more complete our democratic way of life by applying its principles to modern industry where men and women make a living collectively. They have changed with the growth of industry and will change again in their methods. Those changes will be made most effectively if students in our high schools and colleges have understood their past growth and present status and are thus prepared to make history as well as study it.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

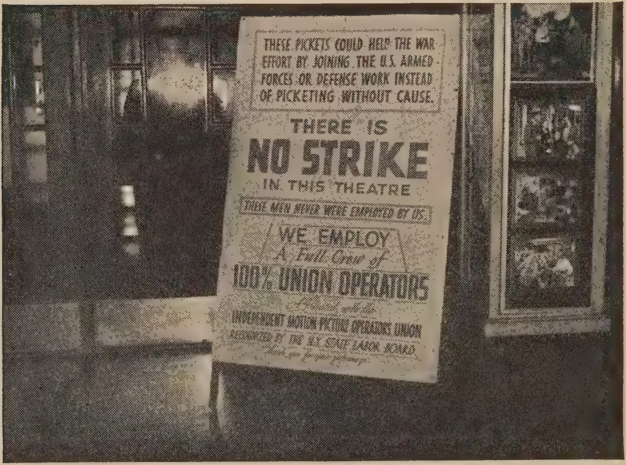
1. Organize a visit to a local union, if available in your city. Allocate to members of your group the checking of the industrial, political, and educational activities of the union visited. Arrange to visit a union meeting.
2. Consult the local Chamber of Commerce upon its attitude to trade unions.
3. Find out when a NLRB hearing is being held. Arrange to observe and report to the class.
4. Write a short description of the La Follette Senate Committee investigation into the use of strike-breakers.
5. Write to the War Production Board, Washington, D. C., for a copy of *Labor-Management News* and current posters and pamphlets. Read up and report to the class.
6. Examine the survey of opinion about union leaders and the power of unions which appeared in *Fortune*, January, 1943.
7. The following statements are taken from a pamphlet, *The Closed Shop*, distributed in certain schools in June, 1942:
   "The closed shop is a Hitler method."
   "The closed shop is as morally wrong as the closed mind."
   "Industry does not wish to be a party to such totalitarian tactics."
   "The closed shop is a threat to the American system, because:
      "(1) It violates spiritual principles.
      "(2) It violates economic principles.
      "(3) It violates the American Bill of Rights.
      "(4) It vests autocratic powers in union leaders.

"(5) It gives union leaders virtual veto power over management.

"(6) It provides a major obstruction to defense production."

Discuss the assertions and give your opinion about them. What group would be likely to publish and circulate such statements?

8. Select members of the class to take part in a round-table discussion of the question: "Does a union member get his money's worth from his dues?"
9. Organize a debate on the topic: Resolved, It is desirable to have vocational high schools separate from college preparatory high schools.
10. As a concluding activity, write a thoughtful, well-organized paper on the subject of the present position of organized labor and desirable directions for labor to take.


THESE PICKETS COULD HELP THE WAR EFFORT BY JOINING THE U.S. ARMED FORCES OR DEFENSE WORK INSTEAD OF PICKETING WITHOUT CAUSE.
THERE IS
NO STRIKE
IN THIS THEATRE
THESE MEN NEVER WERE EMPLOYED BY US.
WE EMPLOY
A Full Crew of
100% UNION OPERATORS
INDEPENDENT MOTION PICTURE OPERATORS UNION
RECOGNIZED BY THE N.Y. STATE LABOR BOARD

11. Many strikes are caused by jurisdictional disputes between unions. Study the picture above and write a short essay describing how this movie theatre is affected by such a dispute. What should be your attitude in these circumstances? (*Charles Phelps Cushing*)

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CHAPTER XI. UNIONS IN ACTION

Students and teachers should consult the convention reports of the national groupings and also of the individual unions. Their current official journals are also a source of information. A large number of unions now print handbooks and pamphlets dealing with specific problems. For example, *Union Chairman's Manual* by Lodge 727 of the Association of Machinists, Burbank, Calif., is a mine of information about shop procedures in an aviation plant. Both the C. I. O. and the A. F. of L. and the Railroad Brotherhoods will supply details of their publications upon request. The Division of Labor Standards, U. S. Department of Labor, Bulletin #60, *Settling Plant Grievances,* and other similar documents are helpful. The U. S. Department of Labor also issues the *Monthly Labor Review* and the *Labor Information Bulletin.* See also references for Chap. I.

Appendix

DIGEST OF THE DRESS AGREEMENTS

JOINT BOARD OF DRESSMAKERS' UNION

(This digest is given to help the student understand what union agreements cover. The New York Joint Board Dressmakers' Union includes four locals with about 70,000 members and is affiliated to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.)

We expect to have the agreements printed in full for distribution to our members. Until such time, however, we find it necessary to present to you a digest of the important clauses of the agreements. For your information old provisions are printed in plain type, while *new provisions are printed in italics*. Provisions for immediate enforcement are underlined.

Fraternally yours,

Julius Hochman,
General Manager

Hours

A week's work consists of 35 hours. The work day begins at 9 A.M., and ends at 5 P.M., with one hour for lunch.

No overtime—*except for samplemakers*—is permitted.

A committee of two Union representatives has the right to visit shops outside of regular working hours and Saturdays and Sundays, if the shop is open, and if someone is there, in order to enforce the 35-hour week.

Violation of hours is punishable by fine.

Overtime for Samplemakers

At the height of the sample season, samplemakers are permitted to work overtime. Such overtime is restricted to one hour a day and samplemakers are to receive time and a half pay. The question of what time during the year the samplemakers shall be permitted to work overtime is to be determined by the Impartial Chairman and is to be uniform for the whole industry.

Wage Scales

The agreement provides for two scales of wages. One scale is for all dresses wholesaling above $3.75 per garment. The other scale for dresses wholesaling for $3.75 and below.

ABOVE $3.75

Scales of Crafts Working by Weeks Only

	per week
Cutters	$45.00
Graders	*45.00*
Special Machine Operators	*31.50*
Samplemakers	30.00
Drapers	27.00
Examiners	21.00
Cleaners	*16.00*
Pinkers	*16.00*

Scales for Piece Work Crafts

	per hour
Pressers	$1.00
Operators	.90
Finishers	.63

$3.75 AND BELOW

Scales of Crafts Working by Week Only

	per week
Cutters	$45.00
Graders	*45.00*
Machine Cutters	37.00
Samplemakers	30.00
Stretchers	27.00
Special Machine Operators	*26.25*
Examiners	20.00
Finishers	20.00
Cleaners	*16.00*
Pinkers	*16.00*

Scales for Piece Work Crafts

	per hour
Pressers	$ .85
Operators	.75

Only finishers are to operate special machines.

There shall be only one system of work, either piece work or week work, in each craft.

Prices for pressing on all lines up to $12.75 have been settled on a minimum flat rate. Above $12.75 prices will have to be settled on each individual garment.

Increases for Pinkers and Cleaners

The increases for the pinkers and cleaners went into effect with the signing of the agreement, on Monday, February 24th. If the pinkers and cleaners in your shop did not receive the increase, please report AT ONCE to the Union and the increase will be enforced and back pay collected.

Increases for Special Machine Operators

All increases for special machine operators went into effect on Monday, February 24th. In inside shops the new scale went into effect at once. In contracting shops an arrangement was made whereby workers who receive below the new minimum are to receive an immediate increase of $2.00, beginning with the week of February 24th, and an increase of $1.00 a month thereafter until the minimum scale is reached. If the special machine operators in your shop have not received the full increase (if it is an inside shop) or the partial increase (if it is a contracting shop) report to the Union AT ONCE and the increase will be enforced and back pay collected.

PRICE SETTLEMENT

The old system of price settlement is changed in the new agreements. Under the provisions of the new contracts, the system is as follows:

All piece rates are to be settled directly with the jobber or manufacturer.

MANUFACTURERS: If a manufacturer employs contractors, prices are settled by a joint price committee elected from the workers of the contracting shops and the inside shop, a Union representative and the manufacturer.

JOBBERS: All prices for jobbers are settled by a joint price committee elected by the workers from all the contracting shops, a Union representative and the jobber.

INSIDE MANUFACTURERS: All piece rates for manufacturers who make all their work in their inside shops are settled by a price committee elected by the workers of the shop, a Union representative and the manufacturer.

When garments are settled, a record of each style shall be made, giving the style number, a full description of the garment, and the piece rates for each craft. A stamp of 50¢ to be paid for by the jobber or manufacturer shall be attached to the settlement form.

Prices shall be settled either on neutral premises or in the jobber's or manufacturer's place of business.

All prices must be settled before the following pay day. If prices are *not settled before the following pay day, the workers have a right to refuse to work until prices are settled.*

All disputes related to price settlements will be settled by the Labor Department of the Administrative Board.

ATTENDANCE IN SHOP

All workers, except cutters, required to come in to the shop during the dull season, shall get at least one-half day's pay.

LEGAL HOLIDAYS

The following legal holidays are included in the agreements: Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and one-half of Election Day. Workers are to receive a full day's pay during these holidays, if they worked the other four days of the week. Otherwise the compensation for the holiday will be in proportion to the number of hours they worked during the rest of the week.

Workers may refrain from working on Columbus Day and May First, but without pay.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MINIMUM SCALES

Jobbers must pay their contractors enough to cover Union wages. *Should the workers fail to make their guaranteed minimums, the jobbers are directly responsible for the difference.*

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PAYMENT OF WAGES

Should contractors fail to pay wages on the regular pay day, the workers must immediately file a complaint with the Union. Under the terms of the agreement jobbers are held responsible for the payment of wages by contractors.

PAY DAY

Payment of wages shall be made in cash on Tuesday of each week, and shall include all work completed on Friday of the preceding week. The workers of such shop wherein a breach of this provision has been committed must stop work until they receive their pay.

LIMITATION OF CONTRACTORS

Limitation of contractors means that jobbers are to employ only as many contractors as they actually need to make their garments, and that contractors can work for one jobber only. To bring about limitation without disturbance and loss of jobs to the workers in the industry, the following rules have been worked out:

Designated Permanent Contractors

Contractors who were working for jobbers as of January 31st, 1936, are designated permanent contractors. A jobber's production must be confined, under the terms of the agreement, to his inside shop, should he have one, and to the number of contractors designated by him. No work shall be given out to non-designated contractors under the penalty of fine. No jobber can give work to any new contractor without permission of the Administrative Board. Should he do so, he must pay a fine.

Equal Division of Work

Work must be divided equally among all contracting shops. Manufacturers are to divide work equally between the inside shop and such designated contractors as work exclusively for them.

Opening Inside Shop or Enlarging Shop

To safeguard equal division of work, no firm is allowed to open an inside shop or enlarge its existing shop without the consent of the Administrative Board, nor can contractors enlarge their shops without the consent of the Administrative Board.

Additional Contractors

Should the increased volume of business require expansion, the firm may take on an additional temporary or permanent contractor, subject to regulations set up in the agreements, if its inside shop and all of its regular contractors are fully supplied with work. Firms breaking the regulations with regard to additional contractors are subject to fine.

Discharge of Contractors

No contractor can be discharged by his jobber except for poor workmanship or late deliveries, subject to decision of the Impartial Chairman.

CUTTING DEPARTMENT

Should any jobber decide to open a cutting department, he must employ cutters who used to work for his contractors. These cutters will be taken on for a trial period of one week, after which they will be entitled to the job.

Members of the Popular Price Group may not give up cutting departments unless the Union agrees to it or the Impartial Chairman so decides, nor may they send uncut work to contractors unless all inside cutters are fully supplied with work.

The names and addresses of all contractors receiving uncut goods must be supplied to the Union.

PRESSING DEPARTMENT

No week work is permitted in pressing departments unless the entire shop works on a week-work basis.

Pressing machines may not be installed or used in any shop where less than 6 hand-pressers are working and are fully supplied with work.

FIRM MAY NOT DO WORK OF CRAFTS

No member of the firm or foreman is permitted to work in the shop. Should this provision be violated the firm will be fined.

NEW MACHINERY

Rules and regulations regarding new machinery are to be worked out by the Administrative Board.

WORKING CARD

No one can start work in a shop unless a working card is presented showing good standing in the Union.

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Employers are forbidden to hire workers through any private employment agency. Workers are not to pay any fees to anyone for getting them a job.

CHILD LABOR

No one under eighteen years of age shall be employed in a shop.

MOVING SHOPS

No shop may be moved to any place to which the fare is more than 5¢.

ACCESSORIES

Firms who purchase or cause to be manufactured belts, covered buttons, buckles, neckwear, artificial flowers, embroideries, hemstitching, pleating and tucking on garments must deal with Union firms only.

DURATION OF AGREEMENT

The present agreements are to remain in force for a period of three years. They will expire on January 31st, 1939.

ADJUSTMENTS OF COMPLAINTS

All violations of any provision of the collective agreements must be reported to the Union AT ONCE.

It has been agreed since the signing of the agreement that the new *system of piece rate settlement shall go into effect the week of April 1st.*

Representatives of all shops working for a given jobber or manufacturer are now being called to meetings for the purpose of electing the joint price committees. You are asked to cooperate with us and respond immediately to these calls.

Meanwhile, until the new system of price settlement is introduced, the old method of price settlement remains. On $3.75 and below, the minimum flat rates prevail. On $4.75, do not work on any garments unless they have been settled at neutral headquarters as heretofore. On all lines above $4.75 prices are to be settled by bargaining in the regular way.

J. H.

LIST OF UNIONS AFFILIATED TO THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR, AS REPORTED TO ITS 1943 CONVENTION

(The figures represent the number of members on which the unions pay per capita tax to the A. F. of L.)

Actors, Associated, & Artists of America	17,700
Asbestos Workers' International Associations of Heat and Frost Insulators	4,000
Automobile Workers of America International Union, United	43,100
Bakery & Confectionary Workers, International Union of America	86,900
Barbers' International Union, Journeymen	49,200
Bill Posters, International Alliance	1,600
Blacksmiths, International Brotherhood of	10,000
Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders, International Brotherhood	286,700
Boot and Shoe Workers' Union	40,000
Bookbinders, International Brotherhood of	27,100
Brick and Clay Workers of America	10,000
Bricklayers, Masons & Plasterers' International Union of America	65,000
Bridge & Structural Iron Workers International Association	112,400
Broom and Whisk Makers' Union, International	400
Building Service Employees' International Union	70,000
Carpenters and Joiners, United Brotherhood of	600,000
Carmen of America, Brotherhood of Railway	80,000
Cigarmakers' International Union	10,000
Cleaning & Dye House Workers	17,100
Clerks, International Protective Association, Retail	100,000
Clerks Post Office, National Federation of	42,900
Clerks, Brotherhood of Railway	191,700
Cement, Lime & Gypsum Workers	19,000
Coopers' International Union	5,000
Diamond Workers' Protective Union of America	600

Distillery Rectifying and Wine Workers International	9,400
Draftsmen's Union, International	4,700
Electrical Workers, International Brotherhood	252,900
Elevator Constructors	10,200
Engineers, International Union of Operating	93,300
Engravers Union of North America, International Photo-	10,800
Fire Fighters, International Association of	36,000
Firemen and Oilers, International Brotherhood of	47,500
Garment Workers of America, United	40,000
Garment Workers, International Ladies	225,000
Glass Cutters League of America, Window	1,600
Glass Bottle Blowers' Association of United States & Canada	24,000
Glass Workers, American Flint	21,700
Glove Workers Union of America, International	3,100
Government Employees, American Federation of	24,200
Granite Cutters' International Association of America	4,300
Hatters, Cap & Millinery Workers International Union, United	32,000
Hodcarriers and Common Laborers, International	420,200
Horse Shoers of United States and Canada	200
Hotel and Restaurant Employees	232,800
Jewelry Workers' International	8,100
Lathers, International Union	8,100
Laundry Workers, International Union	50,000
Leather Workers' International Union, United	3,200
Letter Carriers, National Association of	60,000
Letter Carriers, National Federation of Rural	400
Lithographers, Amalgamated	13,600
Longshoremen's Association, International	53,900
Maintenance of Way Employees, International Brotherhood of	118,500
Marble Polishers, etc., International Association of	4,800
Masters, Mates and Pilots of America	3,000
Master Mechanics and Foremen of Navy Yards and Naval Stations, National Association of	300
Messengers, Special Delivery, National Association	900
Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen	97,100
Metal Workers' International Association, Sheet	25,000
Mine Workers of America, Progressive	35,000
Molders Union of North America, International	61,900
Musicians, American Federation of	100,000
Painters of America, Brotherhood of	132,800
Papermakers, United Brotherhood of	26,200
Patternmakers' League of North America	10,700
Pilots Association, Air Line	1,700
Plasterers' International Association	25,000
Plumbers, Steamfitters, etc.	65,000
Polishers, International Union of Metal	10,000
Porters, Brotherhood Sleeping Car	8,700
Pocketbook & Novelty Workers	14,400
Post Office & Railway Mail Laborers	1,500
Potters, National Brotherhood of Operative	21,500
Printing Pressmen, International	48,500
Printers', Die Stampers' & Engravers, Plate	900

Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers	60,000
Railway Employes, Street & Electric	98,800
Railway Mail Association	21,800
Roofers, Damp & Waterproof Workers Association	7,000
Seafarers International Union of North America	30,000
Siderographers, International Association of	100
State, County & Municipal Employees	36,000
Spinners Union International	500
Stage Employes, International Alliance Theatrical	42,000
Stereotypers & Electrotypers	8,900
Stonecutters Association, Journeymen	1,900
Stove Mounters' International Union	8,000
Switchmen's Union of North America	8,800
Teachers, American Federation of	22,900
Teamsters, Chauffeurs, etc. International Brotherhood	602,900
Telegraphers, Commercial	10,700
Telegraphers, Order of Railroad	30,000
Textile Workers of America, United	40,800
Tobacco Workers International Union	21,000
Upholsterers, International Union of	16,000
United Wall Paper Crafts of North America	3,100
Wire Weavers' Protective, American	400

Unions which have withdrawn affiliation or have been suspended or had their charter revoked at the time of the Boston Convention include: International Union of Brewery Workers (42,000), International Association of Machinists (328,500), International Typographical Union (79,200), and United Mine Workers of America (600,000).

LIST OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL UNIONS AFFILIATED TO THE CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS AS REPRESENTED AT ITS SIXTH CONVENTION, 1943

(Membership figures from *Handbook of Labor Unions.*)

Aluminum Workers of America	55,000
Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians, Federation of	8,000
Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers	1,100,000
Barbers and Beauty Culturists Union of America	3,500
Cannery Agricultural Packing and Allied Workers of America, United	125,000
Clothing Workers of America, Amalgamated	300,000
Communications Association, American	18,353
Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America, United	430,000
Farm Equipment and Metal Workers, United	60,000
Federal Workers of America, United	30,000
Fishermen and Allied Workers of America, International Union of	18,000

Fur and Leather Workers Union, International	80,000
Furniture Workers of America, United	45,000
Gas, Coke and Chemical Workers of America, United	30,000
Glass, Ceramic and Silica Sand Workers of America, Federation of	29,500
Inland Boatmen's Union of the Pacific	3,000
Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, International	40,000
Marine Cooks' and Stewards' Union	4,000
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, National	8,958
Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, Industrial Union of	250,000
Maritime Union, National	50,000
Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, International Union of	80,000
Newspaper Guild, American	20,202
Office and Professional Workers of America, United	43,000
Oil Workers International Union	100,000
Optical Workers Coordinating Committee	*
Packing House Workers of America, United	80,000
Paper, Novelty and Toy Workers' International Union, United	52,000
Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Employees, United	120,000
Rubber Workers of America, United	137,400
Shoe Workers of America, United	40,000
State, County and Municipal Workers of America	38,000
Steelworkers of America, United	725,625
Stone and Allied Products Workers of America, United	3,600
Textile Workers Union of America	400,000
Transport Service Employees, United	12,650
Transport Workers Union of America	95,000
Utility Workers Organizing Committee	*
Woodworkers of America, International	65,000

* Not reported.

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